

Islamic Architecture and the Prospect of its Revival Today

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Abstract--This paper discusses the meaning of Islamic architecture and some of its salient characteristics. The discussion is divided into the following sections: (1) What is Islamic architecture?; (2) Islamic architecture as a means, not an end; (3) Two examples: the Islamic house and the mosque; (4) Pragmatism and Islamic architecture today; (5) Towards the revival of Islamic architecture. The paper seeks to enhance the awareness, both of the professionals and general readership, as to the importance of correctly conceptualizing and practicing Islamic architecture. The nature of the paper, along with its content, methodology and conclusions, is conceptual and philosophical, rather than empirical. The paper concludes that Islamic architecture is an architecture that embodies the message of Islam. It both facilitates the Muslims' realization of the Islamic purpose and its divine principles on earth, and promotes a lifestyle generated by such a philosophy and principles. At the core of Islamic architecture lies function with all of its dimensions: corporeal, cerebral and spiritual. The role of the form is an important one too, but only inasmuch as it supplements and enhances function.

Keywords: Islamic architecture, Islam, Muslims, the Islamic house, the mosque, form and function

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 *'ibadah* (worship) activities of Muslims, 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>), 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.

Central to Islamic architecture is function with all of its dimensions: corporeal, cerebral and spiritual. The form divorced from function is inconsequential. This, however, by no means implies that the form plays no role in Islamic architecture. It does play a prominent role, but its relevance is a supportive one supplementing and enhancing function. The form is important, but in terms of value and substance it always comes second to function and its wide scope. There must be the closest relationship between the ideals that underpin the form of buildings and the ideals that underpin their function, with which the users of buildings must be at ease. A rift, or a conflict, between the two is bound to lead to a conflict of some far-reaching psychological proportions in the users of buildings. This way, the roles of the form become equivalent to the roles of function.

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE AS A MEANS, NOT AN END

Islamic architecture exists because of the existence of Islam. Moreover, in so many ways it serves the noble goals of Islam. Islamic architecture

serves Muslims too, in that it aids them to carry out successfully their vicegerency (*khilafah*) mission on earth. Islamic architecture aims to help, rather than obstruct, Muslims in fulfilling that which they have been created for. Islamic architecture is Islam-manifested. Islamic architecture, Islam and Muslims are inseparable. Islamic architecture originated with the advent of Islam on the world scene. It never existed before, even though the peoples that became instrumental in molding and perpetuating its conspicuous identity lived where they were for centuries before embracing Islam and possessed the cultures and civilizations of their own. Indeed, studying Islamic architecture by no means can be separated from the total framework of Islam: its genesis, history, ethos, worldview, doctrines, laws and practices. While exemplifying Islamic beliefs and teachings through the hierarchy of its diverse roles and functions, Islamic architecture evolved a unique soul. Such a soul is best recognized and appreciated only by those whose own lives are inspired and guided by the same sources as is Islamic architecture. (Afif Bahnassi, <http://www.isesco.org.ma>)

Due to this, Alfred Frazer, as reported by M. A. J. Beg (1981), said about the fundamental nature of Islamic architecture: "The architecture of Islam is the expression of a religion and its view of the world rather than that of a particular people or political or economic system."

In the same vein, Titus Burckhardt (1976) also wrote that it is not surprising, nor strange, that the most outward manifestation of Islam as a religion and civilization reflects in its own fashion what is most inward in it. The same author further remarked: "If one were to reply to the question 'what is Islam?' by simply pointing to one of the masterpieces of Islamic art such as, for example, the Mosque of Cordova, or that of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, or one of the *madrasahs* in Samarqand...that reply, summary as it is, would be nonetheless valid, for the art of Islam expresses what its name indicates, and it does so without ambiguity."

Islamic architecture means a process that starts from making an intention, continues with the planning, designing and building stages and ends with achieving the net results and how people make use of and benefit from them. Islamic architecture is a fine blend of all these stages which are interlaced with the tread of the same Islamic worldview and Islamic value system. It is almost impossible to single out a tier in the process and regard it more important than the rest. It is because of this conspicuous spiritual character of Islamic architecture, coupled with its both educational and societal roles, that the scholars of Islam never shied away from keenly addressing a number of issues pertaining to various dimensions of

residential, mosque and communal architecture within the scope of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh islami*). (Al-Hathloul, 2002) The relevant issues are discussed under different headings such as: legal rulings in connection with neighbours and neighbourhoods (*ahkam al-jiwar*), reconciliation (*al-sulh*) between immediate neighbours and all the people in a neighbourhood, people's individual and collective rights, prohibition of inflicting harm (*darar*), legal rulings pertaining to building (*ahkam al-bina'*), and public services and facilities (*al-marafiq*). All these issues undoubtedly play a significant role in shaping the identity of Islamic architecture. They are either directly or indirectly related to conceiving, designing, forming and using Islamic architecture. Since architecture is people's art greatly influencing their moods and the day-to-day life engagements, the same issues concerning architecture are studied as part of exhaustive encyclopaedic works on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh islami*).

Islamic architecture accepts no rigidity, formalism and literal symbolism, especially in relation to its structural domains. What makes an architecture Islamic are some invisible aspects of buildings, which may or may not completely translate themselves onto the physical plane of built environment. (Bianca, 2000) The substance of Islamic architecture is always the same, due to the permanence of the philosophy and cosmic values that gave rise to it. What changes are the ways and means with which people internalize and put into operation such philosophy and values to their own natural and man-generated circumstances. Such changes or developments could simply be regarded as most practical "solutions" to the challenges people face.

Islamic architecture thus promotes unity in diversity, that is, the unity of message and purpose, and the diversity of styles, methods and solutions. (Al-Faruqi, 1985) The identity and vocabulary of Islamic architecture evolved as a means for the fulfilment of the concerns of Muslim societies. Islamic architecture was never an end in itself. It was the container of Islamic culture and civilization reflecting the cultural identity and the level of the creative and aesthetic consciousness of Muslims. Architecture, in general, should always be in service to people. It is never to be the other way round, that is to say that architecture should evolve into a hobby or an adventure in the process imposing itself on society while forsaking, or taking lightly, people's identities, cultures and the demands of their daily struggles. Architecture, first and foremost, should remain associated with functionality. It should not deviate from its authentic character and stray into the world of excessive invention and abstraction.

TWO EXAMPLES: THE ISLAMIC HOUSE AND THE MOSQUE

To clarify further the previous points, we shall briefly discuss the examples of the Islamic house and the mosque.

The Islamic House

Islam did not instruct Muslims how to build houses, but it did instruct them how to carry out a number of tasks directly or indirectly associated with the house and housing phenomena. Some of such tasks are: privacy protection against the outside world, among the family members, and between the family members and visitors, respect for the rights of guests and visitors, respect for the rights of neighbours, the relationship between men and women, the implications of carrying out religious obligations, cleanliness, peaceful coexistence with the natural environment, safety, security, recreation, modesty, Islam's aim to preserve the life, religion, mental and psychological strength, descendants and wealth of its people.

The net result of this strategy is that there are many types of the Islamic house, such as those in the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, Turkey, Iran, the Islamic West (*al-maghrib al-Islami*), etc., but the soul and fundamental nature of all those housing types are always the same and are easily recognizable by those familiar with the character of Islam and the character of its civilization. What those different-yet-same, or same-yet-different, houses represent are, in fact, people's solutions to the challenges of living their family lives in line with their religious guidelines while, at the same time, complying with the requirements of the climate, geography, traditions, economy and building technology of the places where they live. While creating Islamic architecture, Muslims betray neither their religion nor their living conditions. This challenge Muslims see as a source of motivation, ingenuity and strength. They do not see it as a problem, hindrance or an impediment. They see it as a service to Islam, society and mankind as a whole.

Eventually, what became to be known as the language of Islamic residential architecture, such as the courtyard, partly or fully screened windows, raising windows above the eye level, bent entrances, double circulations inside houses, inward looking designs, guest rooms near main entrances and away from houses' core, certain decorative systems, etc., such must be seen as sets of best solutions that people have evolved over centuries for themselves. (Fathy, 1986; Hakim, 1988) They are to be seen as no more

than that. Such structural solutions must not be seen as the prescribed language of Islamic residential architecture that cannot be revised, enriched, improved, altered and even abandoned, to a certain extent or completely, if necessary and in favour of some other equally or more viable solutions presented by advances made by science and technology, and generally by the implications of the time and space factors. Likewise, such structural solutions are not to be held as religious symbols with some ontological significance.

However, there is only one thing that must be honoured at all times and that cannot be compromised under any circumstances in housing, that is, the sanctified functions of the house which render it a place to rest, relax the body and mind, enjoy legitimate worldly delights, worship, teach, learn and propagate the message of Islam, and which makes the house a restricted sanctuary where privacy, protection, safety and security are ensured. In other words, the house is to function as an institution with a potential to take up the role of an educational and training center able to produce, in concert with other societal establishments, individuals capable of transforming the whole communities they belong to. If the family is the basic and most important societal unit, then the same can be said about the house which is the physical locus of the former. Indeed, without the two, the total realization of the divine purpose on earth becomes impossible.

The Mosque

Another example is concerning the mosque institution, by far the most easily identifiable element of Islamic architecture. Islam did not instruct the Muslims how to build mosques, but it did instruct them to build mosques and to make them function as places of collective worship and community development centres. The Prophet (pbuh) built quite a number of mosques in Madinah, which was the prototype Islamic city and played the role firstly as the city-state and later as the capital of the ever-expanding Muslim state. The functions performed by mosques built by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), particularly his mosque in Madinah, were so powerful that they epitomized the multifaceted societal dimensions of Islam. The primary aim of all the mosques built afterwards was to emulate the Prophet's example in this regard.

Nevertheless, the form of the mosques built during the Prophet's era was very simple. His mosque in Madinah, for example, when firstly built consisted of an enclosure with walls made of mud bricks and an arcade on the *qiblah* side (towards Makkah) made of

palm-trunks used as columns to support a roof of palm-leaves and mud. There were initially three entrances in the east, west and southern walls. The fourth, i.e., the northern wall, was the *qiblah* side facing the al-Masjid al-Aqsa, the first *qiblah* which lasted about one year and a few months. However, as the *qiblah* was changed to face south towards Makkah, the southern entrance was subsequently bricked up and a new one on the northern side constructed. Before the *qiblah* changed, there was, in all likelihood, no roofed area in the mosque, but after it, an arcade on the southern side facing Makkah was created.

The Prophet's mosque had a few rudimentary facilities. However, before the Prophet's death and as the Madinah community and its needs considerably grew, the shape of the mosque underwent more than a few notable structural modifications, such as its enlargement, the introduction of the pulpit (*minbar*) and illuminating the mosque by oil lamps. Thus, the impact that changes in human living conditions can have on the form of architecture has duly been recognized. This causal relationship between the evolution of the language of mosque architecture and Islamic architecture, in general, and the improvement of the living standards of Muslims went on till Islamic civilization attained its apogee and with it the language of Islamic architecture achieved its conspicuous sophistication and excellence.

However, when the rich and versatile language of mosque architecture evolved, the new developments signified people's answers and solutions to the challenge of maintaining mosques to function as the centres of Islamic collective worship and as the centres for community development, while, at the same time, conforming to the requirements of the climate, geography, traditions, economy and building technology of the places where they lived. The net result of this approach is that there are many ways of building mosques, such as those in the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, Turkey, Iran, Morocco, Malaysia, China, etc., but the soul and fundamental nature of all those mosque types are always the same and are easily recognizable by those familiar with the character of Islamic worship and the character of Islamic cultures and civilization. (Al-Faruqi, 1985)

Eventually, what became to be known as the language of mosque architecture, such as the minaret, courtyards, the *minbar* (pulpit), the *mihrab* (praying niche), domes, arches, *iwans*, certain decorative styles, etc., must be seen as the best solutions and facilities that people have evolved over centuries for themselves so that the projected roles of mosques are ensured. Such solutions and facilities must not be seen as religious symbols containing some ontological

bearing. Nor are they to be held as the prescribed language of mosque architecture that cannot be revised, enriched, improved and adjusted, thus accommodating the provisions presented by the advances made by science and technology, and generally by the implications of the time and space factors. After all, what matters most is making the mosque institution with its demanding civilizational mission as effective, dynamic, relevant and attractive as possible through various means and methods. This is exactly what Muslims were up to while evolving the rich and colourful language of mosque architecture, in particular, and Islamic art and architecture, in general.

PRAGMATISM AND ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE TODAY

Islam is a complete way of life. Its values and teachings, together with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), whose primary task was to explain to mankind and put into practice the precepts of Islam, are universal and timeless. The significance of Islamic architecture is universal and permanent too, in that the philosophy that it embodies is the Islamic one. However, such is the nature of Islamic architecture that it is receptive to both advances in science and technology and the dictates of people's living conditions.

It is an imperative that Muslim architects always remember this verity while trying to revive and sustain the concept of Islamic architecture. In so doing Muslim architects are bidden to, firstly, identify the general Islamic guidelines and principles pertaining to the enterprise of building. Next, they must be fully aware of the implications of the dilemmas and challenges their time and the diverse regions in which they live entail. They cannot be trapped in a historical episode, overly romanticizing it and attempting to emulate the architectural solutions the Muslims of that particular period successfully evolved. If something was the norm during a period and in a particular ecological setting, such by no means can be the same in every subsequent period and in different ecological settings. Technological advancements rapidly change; demands of different eras fluctuate, even under the same ecological conditions; climate exigencies must be painstakingly heeded; and, lastly, human psychology also changes with the change of time and space posing a number of exigencies of its own. No architectural plan and design which served as a solution for an age and place can be simply "parachuted" to another age and place without properly modulating it to its rigorous environmental and socio-cultural requirements.

(Fathy, 1986; Akbar, 1988) To do that is to betray the dynamic spirit of both the common sense and the perpetual message of Islam. Blind and ignorant imitations and following, even in sheer religious matters, are categorically rebuked by Islam.

While taking hold of the general Islamic guidelines and principles with reference to creating an Islamic architecture, on the one hand, and while studying the needs of different times and situations so that the former can be accurately understood and applied, on the other, Muslim architects in reality perform a degree of *ijtihad*, i.e., forming an independent opinion or judgment within the framework of an available text. In doing so, if one excels one receives two rewards from God, but if one for whatever reason fails to deliver, after he had tried his best, one is bound to receive one reward from God, as propounded by the Prophet (pbuh) in one of his traditions. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 6805) Based on this tradition, in no way can a serious, enlightened, accountable and willing person be a loser as far as the execution of matters ordained by God is concerned. Verily, this divine assurance should serve to the Muslim architects and designers as a starting point to look carefully and critically at the state of architecture and how buildings in the Muslim world are planned and designed, as well as to start contemplating the prospects of finding much better solutions which will be inspired by and infused with the values of Islam, and will be responsive to the exigencies of different times and regions.

At the start, Muslim architects ought not to be bound by a single historical structural model, device or solution. The past is to be viewed all the time as such, i.e., the past. It is to be neither excessively venerated or idealized nor completely disregarded. (Akbar, 1988) The past must be put in its true perspective with such notions as wisdom, pragmatism and practicality leading the way. In their daunting search for contemporary Islamic architecture, Muslim architects and designers must be driven by a clear principled vision, a free spirit and an insatiable thirst for ingenuity, which must be shrouded in strong determination, self-belief and quest for excellence. However, should some modern structural devices or solutions appear to bear a resemblance, partly or totally, to the ones used in the past, one is not to shy away from reviving them within the existing contexts. The history of Islamic architecture is not to be looked down at as entirely outmoded and worthless. As we are against blind and ignorant imitation of the past, we are likewise against disengaging ourselves from it and completely ignoring the numerous lessons that we can learn therefrom. Indeed, much can be learned from history because the protagonists of any historical

episode while solving their problems possessed the same vision and objectives as we do today while solving the problems of our own. On the other hand, however, we have to be extremely mindful and selective as to what exactly to benefit from history, in which areas and how far we are to emulate our predecessors, because most of their problems were the product of the circumstances under which they operated, whereas our problems are the product of the circumstances under which we operate. Hence, seldom can their solutions be utterly ours.

There is no such thing as a standardized Islamic architecture which can be reproduced anytime and anywhere. If truth be told, there is nothing as such in the whole body of the Islamic built environment. Therefore, Muslim architects and designers should not hesitate to unleash their burning Islamic spirit, desire, imagination and creativity in order to conceive and create such an architectural tradition that will be compatible with the requirements of both the religious message and modernity. Undoubtedly, the given solutions will have to vary from one region to another, somewhere more and somewhere less. But the essence of all the possible designs, including those adopted as the best solutions in history, will remain one, because of the same worldview and the same religious spirit and foundation that underpin the presence of Muslims and bind all the Muslim peoples regardless of their different geographical locations, cultures and historical appearances. (Al-Hathloul, 2002) Whatever conception and form are eventually given to such an architecture, the same is absolutely qualified to be branded as "Islamic". On account of its location, sheer exterior, or association with a historical moment, no building can be more Islamic than others. What matters, imperatively, is the total function and utility, that a building is imbued with the soul and purity of Islam, and that it stands for an embodiment of the Islamic values and principles insofar as the fulfilling of a building's functions and roles is concerned.

Thus, perceiving and creating Islamic architecture is a very serious task. It is about giving people some of their fundamental rights, executing a religious obligation, and contributing to an appropriate or an otherwise implementation of the message of Islam. The corollary of all this is that Muslim architects, and all the other professionals in the field of built environment at large, must enhance considerably their knowledge of Islam: its *Sharia'h* and worldview. This may appear as a daunting task to many, however, needless to say that it is incumbent upon every Muslim, male and female, to know the rulings of Islam pertaining to the obligations and teachings they have to adhere to in their life.

While Islamizing the notion of architecture in both theory and practice, Muslim architects and engineers can draw on their own familiarity with the rulings of Islam, provided the same is adequate. Otherwise, trustworthy religious scholars, who are both qualified and broad-minded, should be consulted and engaged as many times as needed. It goes without saying that unremitting inter and cross-professional studies and research activities appear to be inevitable. This is bound to lead gradually to narrowing down the glaring gap separating the religious scholars and their fields of interest from the secular ones and their own fields of interest. This way, every scholar will become aware as to his/her role in society and his/her obligations toward society, nature and God. Certainly, the religious scholars will have to widen their interests and concerns, becoming what they are actually always meant to be: the guardians of societies. But to secure that accolade they ought to reevaluate themselves and their undertakings, striving to be a more practical, approachable, people-friendly, and less dogmatic and idealistic lot. Whereas the secular scholars will have to think of Islamizing their knowledge, wherever there is a conflict of interests and as much as possible, realigning their scientific goals and aspirations with the goals and aspirations of the Muslim community to which they belong.

Certainly, it is a high time that a serious and scientific initiative of integrating the Islamic worldview and value system into architecture takes off in the Muslim world. However, such a scheme ought to constitute but a segment of a broad Islamization project aimed at bringing about a total harmonization between the education systems of Muslims and the teachings of Islam. It is not only that architecture should be targeted by the scheme, but also the whole of built environment professions. The process of integration will yield best results if it were embarked on gradually, after people have become convinced of its relevance and urgency.

In universities and colleges where students undertake architecture programs, some in-depth and deemed most needed programs on Islamic studies can be taught. Lecturers and tutors must be well-educated, well-trained and must lead by example. Their role is critical. The mission of Islamization is a massive and complex one so students will always look up at their teachers for inspiration and guidance. The programs can be taught independently or they can be integrated into the syllabus of other courses. The latter option is an excellent one, as it is spontaneous and natural, hence more effective. Due to the obvious relevance and applicability of the integrated subject matter, the students will have little or no reasons to develop any aversion to what they are subjected to. The former

option, however, if applied alone is not really a helpful one, as it is suggestive, nominally though, of perpetuating the existing rift between the religious and architectural sciences. At best, the same can be seen as just an addendum to the existing curriculum, to which the students are bound to develop much indifference. Definitely, the best and most workable solution would be a feasible combination of both options. In the process, either option can be given more emphasis on the expense of the other, subject to the dictates of different situations. However, no matter what model is eventually developed, this aspect of Islamization process can become effective only if students are constantly urged to incorporate what they have learned in the classroom into their practical work in studios and laboratories. Above all this, furthermore, intensive workshops, seminars and trainings can be periodically organized for those who have already graduated and are actively involved in construction sector professions, so that continuity is ensured and if considered necessary with some professionals, enthusiasm for the mission renewed.

It would be even better if education systems of Muslims are such that all students come to colleges and universities with a reasonable amount of knowledge about Islam and its culture and history, which they have obtained beforehand at the lower levels of their study. What would then transpire in colleges and universities is that no time will be wasted on clarifying basic concepts and on dealing with introductory issues. Rather, straight from the beginning the core issues could be seriously approached from perspectives that suite the level of students' study, aptitude and interests. It could be then hoped that within the prescribed timeframe which students spend in colleges and universities, a significant set of objectives with respect to Islamization and integration of knowledge can be successfully achieved. Then, the whole enterprise will in due time become a serious, sought-after and productive scientific project, rather than a superficial, superfluous and decorative diversion.

TOWARDS THE REVIVAL OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Islamic architecture is a fine blend of loads of conceptual and practical factors which are interwoven with the treads of the belief system, teachings and values of Islam. In order to expedite and give more sense to the process of reviving, revitalizing and Islamizing the architecture of Muslims today, the following observations and suggestions could be taken into account:

- Reviving Islamic architecture is an extremely serious and demanding task. It requires major contributions and high-spirited concerted efforts of many parties from across the wide spectrum of society: government, educators, practitioners, professional bodies, NGOs, members of the business community, students and the general public. Certainly, relevant governmental departments, colleges and universities, private architectural firms and institutions are identified as the most relevant agencies and their people as the most important protagonists in spearheading and managing the Islamization of the architecture project. The responsibilities of these parties are the biggest on account of their roles in society. It follows that in case of failure, especially if such happens due to deliberate mediocrity, lack of interest and apathy, their share of blame will be the biggest one as well.
- Defining and clarifying the necessary concepts and terminology such as “Islamic architecture”, “Muslim architect”, “Islamic aesthetics”, “Islamic built environment”, “Islam and building”, “the Qur’an and the Prophet’s *sunnah* as the sources of Islamic architecture”, “Islam and the environment”, “*ihsan, itqan* or excellence”, “man as *khalifah* or the vicegerent on earth”, “Islam as a comprehensive way of life”, “Islam as the final and universal revelation”, “Islam and culture”, “Islam and civilization”, “Islam and society”, “Islam and history”, etc.
- Developing a comprehensive code of conduct for Muslim architects based on general Islamic ethics and teachings. It can be called “Islamic architectural ethics”.
- Expounding and invalidating the popular errors and misconceptions about all the aspects of Islamic architecture. The causes of such errors and misconceptions are to be carefully investigated so that the conditions conducive to breeding confusion and misunderstanding towards Islamic architecture are forever wiped out.
- History of Islamic architecture, commencing with the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) till the present, to be critically surveyed and examined. This is so because in order to properly diagnose the present predicaments plaguing Islamic architecture and to be able to chart a better future course with regard to the same, the Muslims must be acquainted with the history of their Islamic societies, in general, and the history of Islamic architecture, in particular. History of Islamic architecture is to be neither excessively venerated nor totally discarded. A middle path is thus to be pursued and adopted. History is to serve as a source for shaping a better present and for forecasting a better future. Ignorance about history means ignorance about the presence and a doubt and insecurity about the future.
- Developing and advancing the Islamic architectural theory based on the most authentic sources of Islam: the Qur’an and *sunnah*, i.e., revelation.
- Studying and paying due respect and appreciation to all the Muslims who excelled in architecture from the dawn of Islam till the present. The roles, reputations and contributions of those persons to society are to be at the core of this type of studies.
- Comparative studies between Islamic architecture and other architectural systems and theories to be undertaken. Unifying and diverging points to be clearly spelled out and scrutinized.
- Since the religion of Islam is the foundation and moral fiber of Islamic culture and civilization, including architecture, Islam likewise is to be the foundation and moral fiber of Muslim educational systems. It is only with a genuine Islamic mindset, passion and purpose that Islamic culture and civilization, including architecture, can be revitalized and restored. Thus, Muslim educational systems must aim to produce generations whose members will be acquainted with, feel affection for, practice, care and live for Islam: its ideology, peoples, history, culture and civilization. Only in such a dynamic, conducive and engaging intellectual environment, genuine Islamic architecture is and can be taught and learned.
- Encouraging, facilitating and supervising a research culture on various issues in relation to the theme of Islamic architecture. This is in order to significantly enrich libraries and bookshops with genuine references on the subject in question so that propagating, teaching and practicing Islamic architecture becomes a viable proposition.
- Promoting architecture as a multidisciplinary branch of learning and a profession much wider than routinely held.
- Encouraging and promoting creative, critical, global, unbiased, unprejudiced and tolerant thinking.
- Advocating strict following in religion and unbound inventing in architecture.
- Promoting a culture of comprehensive excellence in Muslim architectural education and practice.

- In Muslim colleges and universities to integrate the Islamic worldview, the belief system, teachings and values of Islam into the architecture curriculum. The integration is to be executed in a spontaneous and natural way at both the theoretical and practical levels. The religious and architectural technical components are to be viewed as the equivalent parts of a whole with no clear demarcation lines separating them. This way, students will have little or no reasons whatsoever to develop any aversion to the notion of integration between the religion of Islam and architecture. Religious components if properly integrated will not be deemed as an addendum to the existing curriculum, or as an extra burden imposed on students. Both religion and architecture will thus be seen in their true light.
- As regards the implementation of the Islamization of architecture project, policy-makers in particular to prepare measures and mechanisms for the implementation and to develop indicators of performance.

CONCLUSION

Islamic architecture is not concerned about the form of buildings only. Islamic architecture signifies a process where all the phases and aspects are equally important. It is almost impossible to identify a phase or an aspect in that process and consider it more important than the others. The Islamic architecture process starts with having a proper understanding and vision which leads to making a right intention. It continues with the planning, designing and building stages, and ends with attaining the net results and how people make use of and benefit from them. Islamic architecture is a subtle balance of all these factors which are interwoven with the threads of the belief system, principles, teachings and values of Islam.

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