

**An anthology of essays on  
Integrating Islamic Values  
in the theory and practice of  
Architecture and  
the Built Environment**

**[Collection of Works by the Academic staff of  
the Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design, IIUM]**

**EDITORS**

**ISMAWI ZEN  
SHIREEN JAHN KASSIM  
NORWINA MOHD NAWAWI**

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Editors:  
Ismawi Zen  
Shireen Jahn Kassim  
Norwina Mohd Nawawi

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# INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES IN AN ECOLOGICAL OUTLOOK OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: A PERSPECTIVE

Spahic Omer

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Islam teaches that man is a vicegerent on earth entrusted with the honorable task of inhabiting it in accordance with the divine guidance given to him. This terrestrial life serves to man as a platform for either elevating his status over that of angels - should he abide by the divinely prescribed rules and regulations - or for debasing himself lower than the rank of animals - should he turn away from Truth and wander aimlessly amidst the innumerable and awesome wonders of creation. (Qur'an, 2:30-33)

Man is created as a social being; endowed with free will, passion and emotions, which could either, lead him to the highest or drag him to the lowest. Humanity is, but a big family with one origin, mission and purpose.

People have been divided into nations and tribes to know each other, learn from each other, and cooperate at various scales in righteousness and piety - not to hate each other and conspire against each other. (Qur'an, 49:13) They are also urged to explore the universe and within the framework rendered by revelation and make their existence convenient, comfortable and meaningful, hence creating in the process cultures and civilizations. However, no sooner does this universal equilibrium become impaired and vitiated than man's relationship with God, his peers and the whole of the environment starts to degenerate.

*In Islam, all things have been created with purpose and in proportion and measure, both qualitatively and quantitatively.*

*Concerning the environment, which is God's creation too, its role is dual: to worship its Lord and Creator, and to be subjected to man whom it surrounds.*

## 2.2 THE CONCEPT OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN ISLAM

In Islam, all things are created with purpose and in proportion and measure, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Concerning the environment, which is God's creation, its role is dual: to worship its Lord and Creator, and to be subjected to man whom it surrounds. As for the former, Allah says:

*"Seest thou not that to Allah prostrate all things that are in the heavens and on earth, - the sun, the moon, the stars, the hills, the trees, the animals, and a great number among mankind? But a great number are (also) such as unto whom the chastisement is justly due. And such as Allah shall disgrace", (Qur'an, 54:49)*

*"None can raise to honor: for Allah carries out all that He wills." (Qur'an, 22:18)*