

**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]**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
FOREWORD.....	iv
PREFACE.....	vi
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
Tawhid and Al-Imarah: A philosophical framework of Architectural and Environmental Design Education Ismawi zen, Department of Landscape Architecture.....	3 ✓
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
Integrating Islamic values in an Ecological outlook of the Built Environment Spahic Omer, Department of Building Technology and Engineering.....	19
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
Deriving Islamic Law of the Built Environment from its sources: A theoretical framewok Azila Ahmad Sarkawi, Department of Urban and Regional Planning .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
Spirit of the Shari'ah: Its integration in the Theory and Practice of Architecture and Urbanism Shuhaidah Md.Noor Ilubis. Department of Urban and Regional Planning.....	59
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
Urban Design and the Islamic City: in the Light of Islamic Values Akeel Noori al-Mullah Hwaish. Department of Architecture.....	79
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
Home and Neighbourhood: An Islamic Perspective Asiah Abdul Rahim, Department of Architecture.....	97 ✓
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
Thoughts on Islamic Values and Environmental Ethics: A Perspective Jamilah Othman Department of Landscape Architecture.....	113
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
Islamic Values in Healthcare Architecture Norwina Mohd. Nawawi, Department of Architecture.....	121
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	
Light, Air, and Water in the Qur'an: Selected aspects of an Environmental approach to the Built Environment Puteri Shireen Jahn Kassim, Department of Building Technology and Engineering.....	143
GLOSSARY.....	150
INDEX.....	160

# THOUGHTS ON ISLAMIC VALUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: A PERSPECTIVE

Jamilah bt Othman

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

There are various verses in the Holy Quran, which assert that existence of the earth is not infinite. It is important to make an analogy, of the evolution of the earth to the lifespan of a single human being. For instance, the stages of evolution in the lifespan of a single man, beginning from infancy, to adolescence, to adulthood, and finally old age.

At the end of his lifespan, man is presumably closer to his final destiny, and consequently faces death. It is believed that the earth is similar to this life-story. Hence it will also experiences similar stages of evolution as man does - and will consequently die. The death of the earth can be associated with its destruction, which can be accelerated due to the environmental degradation. When that day comes, it is known as the doomsday of the earth - as foretold in the the Qur'an.

In relation to that, human activities can be seen as factors that accelerate the death of the earth. According to Enger and Smith (2002), the rapid growth of the human population on the earth will inevitable lead to increased pollution due to the increased use of natural resources; and to the depletion of natural resources, and ultimately, to the slow destruction of the environment.

## 7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND ISLAM

The term 'Environmental Ethics' can be simply associated with actions that are right and actions that are wrong. For example, Leopold's (1949) viewpoints on the field of land ethics. He claimed that:

***"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise ... We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." (In Enger and Smith, 2002)***

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<sup>1</sup>The age of the planet earth is claimed to reach 4,700 million years (Jellicoe and Jellicoe, 1987). Due to it tremendous lifespan, this has shown how extremely old the planet is. It is afraid that the young days of the earth had already passed, since 4,700 million years is obviously too ancient. If it is the case, it is strongly felt that the time left may not sustain the earth any longer. It is not surprising to learn that many classical authors had observed earth as a living being, vulnerable to aging, illness, and mortality (Cunningham et al., 2003).