

Architecture according to the Perspective of the Qur'an: An Evaluation

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Abstract

Islamic architecture is part of the element of art produced by a group of people who love something beautiful in nature. In the Quran itself has stated that the beauty of something is no relation to love, faith and God. In this paper, the author felt compelled to see Islamic architecture according to the perspective of the Quran that pointed less existence of institutional building of the mosque as a symbol and a landmark of Muslims in the world. One of the main objectives in this writing was discussing the definition of the architecture in the debate of the concept, philosophy and goals of Islamic architecture itself and in the context of the human relationship with the Creator. In addition, this writing discusses the characteristics of Islamic architecture that became the foundation of a building. In this writing also, author is using qualitative methodology focusing on research on the analysis of documents and observations in the study to make it more effective. The study found that, Islamic architecture that can be seen through the mosque building which has distinctive features in architecture, complementing the exhibit uniqueness based on Islamic syariah.

Keywords: Architecture, Mosque, The concepts, Philosophy, Distinctive

Introduction

Islamic architecture or in the language refers to or known as a '*Imarah Islamiah*' and was much displayed to the world since immemorial and expanded from the time to time. When talking about Islamic architecture, certainly, it is closely related to the mosque. Therefore, Islamic architecture has the characteristics and its own philosophy in the context of the human relationship with God. It is always growing and expanding all over the world on a factor

of natural law set by God. It is the role of the Muslim community, making the Islamic architecture as a model and around the glory of civilization as long as it is not contrary to Islamic law.

Objective Of The Study

Among the objectives of this study were:

- a. To describe the definition of architecture according to Muslims community and the Western.
- b. To identify the concept of architectural philosophy in Islam and goals.
- c. To identify the characteristics of Islamic architecture as a whole/

The Review Of Methodology

This study used qualitative method that focused on data collection and data analysis. Both formulations are suitable as the author used data collection in setting up research and observations followed by content analysis. The authors also use secondary sources references such as books, journals, thesis dissertation to complete this study.

Definition Of Architecture According To Islam And The Quran Islamic

Architecture is part of the art subdivision of the field generated by a group of human society that has a natural love for something called natural beauties. Therefore, Islamic architecture always esteemed and appreciated because the objective is to increase the faith and piety to Allah. The architecture also plays a role in the fulfillment of spiritual and physical demands that are related in terms of material and spiritual. Thus, Islam has set guidelines so that the arts can provide the appropriate functions and to meet the requirements of the Islamic Shariah (Shafie Abu Bakar 1984 : 6)

In addition, the Beg M.A.J. pay attention to the Islamic architecture. He has the opinion that the architecture of Islam is the expression of a prohibit and its view of the world rather than that of a particular people of political or economic system. "Titus Burckhardt also gave the idea in her writings indicating Islamic architecture is a manifestation in the formation of a civilization according to the styles and changes of the era (Burckhardt Abdul Jabar Beg 1981: 16). He gave the view that Islam is reflected through art on the building of mosques such as the Mosque of Ibn Tulun Cardova, etc. He said, "Would be nonetheless valid, for the art of Islam expresses what its name indicates, and it does so without ambiguity."

Islamic art is not born with the birth of Islam. But it is the starting point for the development of Islamic architecture when Quba' Mosque is home built by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. in Quba.' Then the construction of the Nabawi Mosque and Quba' Mosque are the sample of basic architecture in Islamic art.

In this era the companions, to show the progress of architecture in physical development that is based on faith, piety and high moral character. The mosque at the era, were adorned with verses of the Koran crafted. At the beginning, this popular mosque construction of the tower which was built quite high in tapered form. The tower is also totally different with a tower built by the Roman and Persian Governments set up with relatively low construction and serves as security. The architecture of the tower shows growing architecture in evolution (A.Hasmy 1975: 146-147).

When the initiation of the Umayyad Government, buildings such as palaces and mosques are built with standing for detached glorious Empire detachment. Some of the building was built as a result of people's tax collection for the benefit of the rulers and nobles who have among them may glorify the mundane. For the time period that various forms of architecture existed. Most of the existence of the buildings rather than the grandeur of the ruler-oriented buildings of a community and the people's welfare.

Therefore, there is a wide variety of religious buildings or even secular nature that was established in the next reign. The attempt about Islamic architecture, form and raw materials used much influenced by environment and historical and cultural background. The architecture of Islamic buildings divided into 3 namely;

- a. The Principality of *Madaniyah* which is a city-building and warehouses (A.Hasmy 1975 : 146-147)
- b. The Principality of *Diniah* which is in the form of building mosques and places of worship.
- c. Principality of *Harbiyyah*, namely, building to building in the military field or a fortress and tower defense.

The Philosophy And Goals Of Islamic Architecture

Islam is a religion, complete with putting the concept of faith against God which makes the universe. The book of Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. to serve as guide and guidelines until the end of time regardless of race and culture of a nation. This can be seen in the society in Nusantara scenario profess Islam and adopt them as communities in Arab Lands. Even though there are cultural differences between the two areas, but it has similarities in the elements that exist in architecture.

In the discussion regarding the philosophy of Islamic architecture, is complicated to explain this issue. The author finds if one wish to know the philosophy of Islamic architecture, first they must be aware of the meaning of Islam itself. Islam includes a way of life based on *tawheed* of Allah SWT because of that, it is very important for linking architecture with individual Muslim life itself.

For example, when an architect of Islam wanted to build a mosque, the main thing that needs to be focused is the need to know the direction of the Qiblat, as well as to understand the function of the mosque as a place of community assemble based on piety to God and word of God in Surah al-Jumah: 9 (al-Quran 1996).

According to Hasan Mu'nis in quoted from Mohd Mokhtar Shaikh Ali, a mosque in Islam is the aspect of understandings and spirit. This is because according to the understandings, the angle has been set by the Prophet when he built the first mosque and intended spirit is the soul of Islam that emphasizes on the faith in Allah S.W.T (Mokhtar, M & Ali 2003: 98-102).

According to Omer Spahic, Islamic architecture has a close relationship with the spiritual as well as physical individual Muslims. He said "Islamic architecture came about to facilitate, foster and stimulate to ceaseless (worship) practices of it users."In the debate, he also stated that architecture as a frame work in implementing the Islamic claim to serve as encouragement for Muslims in performing worship either through daily worship or devotion. This can be proved through the building of mosques as a place of worship for the Islamic

community's primary that could be described as identity, culture and the Muslim civilization itself. Likewise, Ibn Abdūn, namely, a judge in Al-Andalus in the 12th century A.D. in the writings cited by Stefano Bianca; "... as an architecture is concerned, it is the haven where man's spirit, soul and body find refuge and shelter." Therefore, the architecture is also regarded as one of the places for human habitation which is also a shelter through the construction of buildings.

The mosque also contains the most important elements in the development of urbanization development in the housing community or the Muslim community. The mosque became the basis for the concept of a ' neighborhood ' or known as the concept of the locality. This clearly shows that mosques provide a positive input in the friendly relationships between the local communities within a city or village through programmes carried out in situ.

In the field of the construction of an architectural structure, an architect should be reviewed so that the architecture is really appreciated by every individual Muslim. The significant appreciation of the philosophy, linking the physical form with spiritual aspects of person. As such, the architecture is in a rare Muslim community focus on the philosophy of architecture, particularly in the context of the architecture of the mosque. The author considers that an architecture has its own function in the context of its relationship with Allah SWT. The elements such as prayer, *mihrab*, towers and dome shapes, create awareness against the magnificence of the platform and the prominence of Allah SWT.

Characteristics Of Islamic Architecture

In describing the characteristics of Islamic architecture, the authors did not find any description associated with it in detail. The writer's results are more general in nature. Among them are the views of the I.H. Qureshi who argue the key features of the first Islamic architecture and the architecture must have space for the entry of light into the buildings as much as possible (Mahayuddin Yahya 1988: 433). This is in accordance with the State of the environment which can provide comfort to Muslims during prayers and the mosque workers or residential houses. The second is to use decorative materials such as *khat* or calligraphy cited verses from the Quran and the Hadith. Application of writing calligraphy is very effective and so harmony once to represent human life. Third room space that separates between male and female. The fourth is the design of a building that must be compatible with local climate of a country. The fifth is the furniture in a building must be simple and beautiful, and there is no element of wastage. The sixth is the architecture also characterize the expression of feelings, peace, peace and silence to the occupants. In other words, does not exist any conflict between elements of spirituality with material or mundane. The seventh is building security should concern and is safe for use in the future. This is proven through some mosques and buildings that have erected nearly one hundred years but still intact and can be used safely. Eighth is arcade or the roof as submitted by E.J. Grube as a complement to the characteristics of Islamic architecture as described above.

In contrast to the views given by Omer Saphic in her writings, the characteristics of Islamic architecture must have erected buildings either personally or even general nature *tawheed* conscious of God and also the importance of the *ummah* (Omer Saphic 2002: 81). This can be evidenced by the construction of a mosque in the city of Medina as a basis of consolidation of the community in the field of religion, economic and social. In addition, techniques and

design of the building also influenced the Islamic architecture. These include local culture, climate, geography and also changes in technology at that time. It also takes into account the creativity, imagination, a combination of skills in architecture based on *tawheed* to Allah SWT.

The addition of these features was also submitted by Mohammad Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi in her writings on Islamic concept of Municipality notes that the characteristics of the architecture has a close relationship with geographical factors, especially in terms of terrain, weather, wind and temperature conditions (Rasdi & Abdul Masnan 2001: 59) These aspects be determinant to the needs of the community against certain features on a building. Similarly, the philosophy of architecture must be able to adapt to the needs and comfort of a free society and not merely to replicate elements of the foreign architecture which reflects the characteristics of Islam. In this case, the construction of a building is considered a feature of Islamic architecture, but some architects are quite marginalize this factor.

However, the authors look at some other factors presented, namely window construction found in the architecture of the Middle East, comprising the small window at the top of the building, including the mosque. Sultan Suleiman Mosque, Istanbul has small windows at the top. Badshahi Mosque, Lahore, Pakistan, has no windows but has a large *iwān* gateway together with other doors. This case clearly shows the factors and weather is one of the main factors in the characteristics of the architecture of the mosque. However, these features vary with the construction of traditional mosques, namely Nusantara Mosque, Kampung Laut Mosque in Kota Bharu and also the Peringggit Mosque in Malacca which have structured a total window. This situation is caused by the climate of the region together with hot and humid rain often requires adequate cooling and wind for ventilation. Therefore, windows became the main element in a building of Islam even in different territories.

These differences saw the need of the local community against the influence of geography in a building. Mohamad Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi has his own standing that of that the political influence of the previous Islamic Government influenced the development of the architecture of the Muslim community at that time. According to an Islamic perspective, that the exchange of power in appointing a consultative system *Khulafa' al-Muslim* heritage system was a very big impact in the development of the Muslim community, especially during the Umayyad and Abbasid. With reference to the next leader, all architectural developments were unjustified referred to the Islamic understanding. Architecture in a building referred to the leaders and the Government, but is not referred to the Islamic understanding.

This view contrasts with the view of E.J. Grube in her writings "What is Islamic Architecture." He highlighted several methods in identifying the characteristics of Islamic architecture. The first of Islamic architecture can be seen in the context of the residence of the Muslim community in West Asia that has internal and external pages seem simple and does not have a window. The second is the architecture associated with buildings such as mosques and also the tomb of its own purposes in the context of reconciliation in spite of different space. He is also associate the Islamic architecture with specific aspects such as *décor*, flowers and geometric patterns and calligraphy.

On the whole, the view of Islamic master nor the West against the characteristics of Islamic architecture can be seen through the building of a mosque that serves as the main symbol

of Islam and in buildings which affects other buildings in the Muslim world. There are certain elements in the design of the building which is identified as the dome design, windows, doors and the others which have relation to the climate, geography and culture of a place. Greetings of Islamic architecture also recognizes aspects of decoration that has its own functions and complement the uniqueness of Islamic architecture itself.

Conclusion

Through the views put forward by scholars whether Islam nor the West, the meaning of architecture has a broad scope which touches various aspects in a building. Similarly, the scope of Islamic architecture, material and spiritual aspects that have to do with *Tauhid* of God. Through the buildings of the mosque on this earth, variety of design that have distinctive features that take the concept of *tauhid* and also creativity in Islamic figures featuring the characteristics of Islamic architecture and as a symbol of the glory of Islamic civilization today.

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