

TAWHID AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the Islamic notion of *tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah) and its implications for Islamic architecture. The paper is divided into two major parts. Firstly, the meaning and significance of *tawhid*, as a cornerstone of the Islamic belief system, is presented. Secondly, *tawhid*'s most important implications for perceiving, creating and using Islamic architecture are explained. The paper seeks to enhance the awareness, both of the professionals and general readership, as to the centrality of the role of the concept of *tawhid* in 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 Muslims' realization of the Islamic purpose and its divine principles on earth, and promotes a lifestyle generated by such a philosophy and principles. The implications of *tawhid* for Islamic architecture are ideological, rather than technical. Such is the profundity of the influence the concept of *tawhid* exerts on Islamic architecture – and on Islamic culture and civilization, in general – that it gives the latter its conspicuous soul and identity. Without the effect of *tawhid*, no architecture deserves to be dubbed 'Islamic'.

Keywords: *Tawhid*, Islamic architecture, Islam, Muslims, Sinan

TAWHID (GOD'S ONENESS)

The notion of *tawhid* is the most important cornerstone in the conceptual framework for Islamic architecture. *Tawhid* means asserting the unity or oneness of Allah. *Tawhid* is the Islamic concept of monotheism. The word *tawhid* is derived from the words *wahid* and *ahad* which mean "one", "unique" and "peerless". Based on the concept of *tawhid*, Muslims believe that God cannot be held equal in any way or degree to any other being or concept. Maintaining that there is no God except Allah and that there is nothing comparable to Him constitutes the essence of *tawhid* and the essence of Islam. Thus, declaring God's oneness, *tawhid*, together with Prophet Muhammad's prophethood

(*shahadah*), is the first requirement for one who wishes to embrace the Islamic religion. *Shirk*, or associating anybody or anything with God making it comparable to Him, is the opposite of *tawhid*. It is the gravest sin which God vowed never to forgive.

Tawhid has three aspects: (1) Oneness of the Lordship of God (*Tawhid al-Rububiyah*) (2) Oneness of the Worship of God (*Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah* or *Tawhid al-'Ibadah*) (3) Oneness of the Names and Qualities of God (*Tawhid al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*).

According to these three aspects, there is only one Lord for all the universe, Who is its Creator, Organizer, Planner, Sustainer and Giver of security. He is the only Creator, the rest is His creation. He is the only Master, the rest are His servants. Nothing from His World can be a quality of the created world, and nothing from the created world can be ascribed to His World. Similarities that exist between the two realms, the divine and earthly, do not exceed the level of sheer names. Beyond that nothing is the same. There can never be an exchange in the arrangement of designations between the two dominions: that of the Creator and that of His creation.

Since the Lord and Master of the world remains as such forever, the servants too remain what they are forever. Since the Creator and Sustainer remains as such forever providing the everlasting source of all that exist, the creatures too remain forever mortal, recipients of and completely dependent on divine material and spiritual provisions. In all their undertakings, it stands to reason, people's primary mission should always be to acknowledge this undeniable truth, unselfishly exhibit its effects and try to integrate it into each and every aspect of their cultural and civilizational accomplishments. People are never to get carried away by their ostensible earthly achievements and, as a result, rebel against the established spiritual paradigms in life and then attempt to modify or manipulate them. People's earthly achievements ought always to reflect God's greatness as opposed to man's smallness, God's self-sufficiency as opposed to man's lack of it, God's infinity and permanence as opposed to man's wavering and insecurity, God's supremacy as opposed to man's fragility. Any other approach would signify a sheer falsehood, deception and fictitious optimism.

Only God deserves to be worshipped. He is the ultimate object of all the spiritual cravings and desires. No other being or

idea can be elevated above its intrinsic status and be accorded some divine power or attributes. God needs no partners or associates in executing His divine tasks. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and self-sufficient. "He is the final end, that is, the end at which all finalistic nexuses aim and come to rest... He is an end for all other ends." (Al-Faruqi, 1995) God is perfect, but not in the sense of perfection as we humans are able to perceive, for we are short of perceiving His divine perfection, but in the sense of the divine perfection as suggested again and again through His revealed words. God's divine Being cannot be represented, personified or in any way expressed by any creature.

Tawhid also means "that one may not name or qualify God except with what He or (Prophet) Muhammad had named or qualified Him, and that nobody else can be named or qualified with those names and qualities. Also, it is a Muslim belief that those names and qualities must be followed verbatim, without changing their meaning or ignoring them completely or twisting the meanings or likening them (giving resemblance) to anything that isn't God." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid>)

Due to the significance of *tawhid*, the holy Qur'an overflows with assertions and descriptions of it. The following verses will be a sufficient summery of a vast corpus of verses:

"Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great." (Al-Baqarah, 255)

"Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him." (Al-Ikhlās, 1-4)

"He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; and He is Knower of all things." (Al-Hadid, 3)

"They say: Allah has taken a son (to Himself)! Glory be to Him: He is the Self-sufficient: His is what is in the heavens and

what is in the earth; you have no authority for this; do you say against Allah what you do not know?” (Yunus, 68)

“There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.” (Al-Shura 11)

“If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! but glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!” (Al-Anbiya’, 22)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF *TAWHID* FOR ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The implications of *tawhid* for Islamic architecture are rather ideological. Isma’il al-Faruqi (1995) said that the influence the concept of *tawhid* exerts on Islamic civilization is such that it gives the latter its identity impressing it by its own mould. The same is true as far as Islamic architecture is concerned because it is an integral part of Islamic civilization. What is more, Islamic architecture is a container of Islamic civilization, as explained in the first chapter, one needing the other for its identification and continued existence. Al-Faruqi (1995) observed: “*Al-tawhid* is that which gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization. In binding disparate elements together, the essence of civilization in this case, *al tawhid* – impresses them by its own mould. It recasts them so as to harmonize with and mutually support other elements. Without necessarily changing their natures, the essence transforms the elements making up a civilization, giving them their new character as constitutive of that civilization. The degree of transformation may vary from slight to radical. It is slight when it affects their form, and radical when it affects their function; for it is the latter that constitutes their relevance to the essence.”

The idea of *tawhid* gives Islamic architecture its conspicuous identity. It also creates in Muslims an unprecedented *tawhidic* outlook on building activities so that there exists the highest level of compatibility between buildings and their users. *Tawhid* ensures that Islamic architecture and Muslims forge a productive and peaceful alliance. They all originated from the same source and serve the same ontological purpose. The

character of Islamic architecture is such that it tries its best to disguise its mundane naturalistic factors and features that may hinder a beholder's focus pointing in turn to a higher order of expression and meaning. The beholder's attention is directed towards the desired end by various ingenious artistic and structural ways and methods which are meant to yield an intuition of the real essence of the Transcendent and its divine infinity and perfection.

Since God is the Creator and Lord of everything, including man, He too is the actual Owner of everything. To God belongs everything in the universe. As far as man is concerned, though being elevated to the degree of God's vicegerent on earth and to whom all things have been subjected, he still possesses nothing. Everything around him has been loaned to him so that he in a responsible and unhindered manner can carry out his duties of vicegerency, no more than that. Even his very self, i.e., his life, man does not own. It belongs to his Creator, and if needed he is to sacrifice it for Him and His cause.

No sooner does man come into this world than he sets out to display his inherent readiness to take from this world: to breath, to wear apparel, to drink, albeit without possessing anything, save his very self, to give away in return. Man is therefore born as an insolvent consumer. Not only does he own nothing, but he also remains forever short of enjoying a power of bringing into being anything without making use of the available raw materials and elements created for him in nature. Creating *ex nihilo* (from absolute nothingness), as a sign of genuine richness, sovereignty and might, is the right and power of God alone. Indeed, everything that man invents, conceives, concocts and creates is possible only thanks to the unbounded bounties and munificence from God which man only discovers, manages, processes, uses and reuses in different ways most convenient and efficient for him. The upshots of man's myriad civilizational pursuits on earth are never really his own possession and, as such, by no means could be solely utilized for returning the debt of creation and existence to God. Hence, being prudent, modest and grateful when dealing with God's gifts that grace existence, as well as when dealing with one's own accomplishments, are some of the virtues most appreciated, and the opposite is some of the vices most detested, in man. God is thus to be acknowledged all the

time and in every interest of man as the final end, as the ultimate object of all desire, as the ultimate source of all goodness, of all value. It is God Who makes every other good; He is the highest good for the sake of Whom every good thing is good. (Al-Faruqi, 1995)

Allah says on this in the Qur'an: "They say: "Allah has begotten a son". Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him. To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He says to it: "Be," and it is." (Al-Baqarah, 116, 117)

"Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper?" (Al-Baqarah, 107)

"A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens. The Beneficent Allah is firm in power. His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth and what is between them two and what is beneath the ground." (Ta Ha, 4-6)

Allah explicitly says that he is the Creator and thus the Owner of everything including people and whatever they are able to make. People's creations and possessions are in fact Allah's: "And Allah has created you and what you make." (Al-Saffat, 96) The Prophet (pbuh) also said in a tradition: "Indeed, it is Allah Who creates every other creator and his creation." (Ibn Kathir, 1981) This tradition is recorded by al-Bukhari in his "*Sahih*" in a section entitled "The creation of people's deeds".

Form-function relationship

This philosophy is strikingly clear also in the field of architecture. Whenever an architect embarks on designing an edifice, he carves out the space needed for his project. The Muslim architect, worthy of his profession, will approach space with reverence, not arrogance, as it is God's physical realm: "If it (space) must be cut for man to have a dwelling, such would have to be done in humility and with ease, harboring no might, no self assertion and no defiance." (Al-Faruqi, 1981) The Muslim architect will therefore always strive to exhibit through his creativity and skills that the buildings designed by him interact with space, to flow into and become part of general space, instead separating itself

from it. Buildings remain connected with the outside space by the open inner courtyard and windows. Toward the same end, the edge of an Islamic building is often crenellated, the skyline sometimes multiplied, and the vertical edges recessed or protruded with broken surfaces designed to lessen the impact of the cut-off in space. (Al-Faruqi, 1981)

The Muslim architect or the Muslim structural engineer will not regard his edifices as the space(s) appropriated exclusively for man, nor will their owners and users. Rather, the appropriated space will be viewed as something temporarily loaned to man, so as soon as he returns to his Creator nobody but himself alone will be held accountable for what he did to the loan, how he handled it, and what he managed to achieve with it. It stands to reason, therefore, that Islamic architecture, just like any other noble pursuit and craft taken up for the sake of pleasing God, the all-Powerful and all-Knowing Creator and Lord, is but a vehicle for accomplishing the mission of Islam, not a goal itself. It is therefore a form of *'ibadah* (worship) and he who practices it will be rewarded accordingly.

As a result of this powerful religious consciousness and zeal inspired and dominated by the concept of *tawhid*, Muslims developed in the field of architecture a culture of covering all surfaces with certain designs aimed at drawing the attention from the upshots of human endeavors to a higher order of expression and meaning. The Muslim architect, thus, intends to humbly demonstrate that he harbors no might, or defiance, or self-assertion when it comes to appropriating and acting in space that does not belong to him; it belongs to Allah the Almighty, the rightful Owner of all creation. The Muslim architect, furthermore, tends to depict himself -- as do the users of buildings -- as a servant rather than a "master", as a trustee rather than an owner, and as a modest mortal rather than a pretentious "creator".

In Muslim buildings, therefore, mass is literally made invisible. This is achieved by covering it with stucco, tile, wood and other materials that transfigure the mass into something radically and totally new and different. (Al-Faruqi, 1981) Buildings simply appear as though enveloped within dissimilar pleasing, dynamic and contemplation-provoking webs of colored decoration. Sometimes when no rich decoration with plentiful motifs and themes could be used on a building surfaces -- due to

the lack of, say, materials, expertise, resources, or even interest -- other practical alternatives had to be then conceived instead, so as to satisfy the same Islamic aesthetic taste. Of such alternatives are: wide-ranging brick patterning when brick is a major building material, the clever use of marble and stone in bands of contrasting colors when stone is a major building material, (Hillenbrand, 1999) laying emphasis on ingenious symmetry in design as well as in organization of inner spaces and architectural motifs, etc. When Ibn Khaldun (1987) touched on the subject of decoration in Islamic architecture: its techniques, language and materials, he concluded: “Thus, the walls come to look like colorful flower beds.”

Isma’il al-Faruqi (1981) concluded that “all the arts of Islam developed in fulfillment of divine transcendence acting as supreme principle of aesthetics. All Islamic arts developed stylization and denaturalization; all were nondevelopmental and nonfigurative; and all did their best to transubstantiate the natural forces of gravity and cohesion, the natural elements of mass, space and light, of water and color, of melody and rhythm, of physiognomy and perceptive – in short of everything natural and creaturely, into floating, air-suspended patterns suggestive of infinity.”

Hence, it follows that the substance of Islamic architecture aims at declaring a big “no” to the corporeality of existence and to its potentially hazardous attractions, and a big “yes” to that which refreshes and rejuvenates the soul which incessantly yearns for the spirit of divinity which the soul feeds on before finally returning to it. (Omer, 2009) However, given that the components of the same corporeal reality have been employed for the production of architecture, than the ultimate appearance of the latter had to be delicately transfigured and denaturalized in order that the refined requirements of Islamic aesthetics are duly met. It is feared that without recourse to both transfiguration and denaturalization, the spiritual purpose of erecting buildings might be harder to attain. Thus, the role of Islamic decoration in Islamic architecture is a principal and essential one, not a secondary or an auxiliary one. Decoration stands at the heart of the identity of Islamic architecture.

Finally, Islamic architecture came into existence in order to meet the requirements of the Islamic notion of *tawhid*. Human

personal ambitions and roles in fathoming and creating Islamic architecture are rather relative and limited, remaining forever inferior and subservient to the commanding influence of *tawhid*. *Tawhid* is at the core of God's holy Being, as well as at the core of His holy Attributes and Actions. It is likewise at the core of the whole of God's creation of which man is a constitutive part. Hence, it stands to reason that all the actions of man, including architecture, are expected to reflect and exude the same *tawhidic* spirit. Moreover, they are to serve as an extension of the existing paradigms of life. They are to exemplify, sustain and further advance the latter.

In the same vein, Islamic architecture is formed in order to answer the demands of the notion of *'ibadah* (worship) which man, God's vicegerent on earth, is required to actualize in all of his lifelong actions so that his relationship with his Creator and Lord is maintained perpetually strong and sound. To Muslims, Islamic architecture is a field for the implementation of the idea of universal worship in Islam. It is thus a kind of *masjid* or mosque, in the sense that it is a place for both direct and indirect worship activities.

It goes without saying that Islamic architecture is such a noble enterprise charged with the highest level of spirituality. (Omer, 2009) There can be no distinction between the spiritual and secular realms in Islamic architecture, just as separation between the spiritual and secular spheres is foreign to Islam as an ideology and a comprehensive way of life. Islam is life and life, in turn, is worship. The only purpose for the creation of man, the main protagonist in life, is that he worships his Creator and Lord, i.e., that he submits to God's will and word while on earth carrying out his honorable assignments. In Islam, everything is to be viewed against the backdrop of this code. The code applies to architecture certainly more than to many other life pursuits on account of architecture being a framework or container for human lives. Islamic architecture is both a means and sets of facilities to Muslims so that their earthly tasks are facilitated and made easier. Islamic architecture with its ideas, ethos, creators and users is the religion of Islam translated in a space and a moment of time.

THE EXAMPLE OF SINAN (D. 1588)

Certainly, it is for this *tawhidic* dimension that Islamic architecture entails that Sinan (2006), the chief architect of the Ottoman golden age, called architecture an “estimable calling” and then said that whosoever is engaged in it must be, first of all, righteous and pious. This means that those who are intent on creating Islamic architecture must, first and foremost, embody the message of *tawhid* in their thoughts, words and actions. Only from such a mentality and lifestyle can Islamic architecture originate and survive. Islamic architecture cannot be formed in milieus and contexts alien to the concept of *tawhid*, and by men whose intentions, concerns and objectives are alien to, or at odds with, the same concept at either conceptual or technical planes.

The same man, Sinan (2006), is also reported to have said, in all likelihood, lest he becomes carried away by his illustrious achievements and the status he acquired: “Thanks be to God! He made manifest (His) favor. When the universe was nonexistent, He caused it to exist. He built the earth upon water, and layered the seven heavenly spheres without columns. He caused these nine domes to stand, and hung suspended the solar sphere. He kneaded clay with (His) hand of power and constructed Adam’s body. Eyes and mouth, ear and tongue gave He. He made us noble human beings.”

Indeed, it is not by a chance that Sinan began each of his autobiographical memoirs with the same *tawhidic* message as the one mentioned above. Before talking about his self, his life and accomplishments as the state’s chief architect, Sinan thus felt compelled to record his due appreciation, recognition, acknowledgment and gratitude to the only real Creator, Sustainer and Master. Sinan knew very well that it was due to Allah’s will, munificence and kindness that he was in a position to do what he did. Hence, in all his words he appeared to be duty bound to endorse his faith, modesty and humbleness, on the one hand, and Allah’s endless power, sovereignty and authority, on the other. Sinan (2006) thus wrote at the beginning of one of his memoirs using a plain and straightforward language: “Boundless thanks to that Architect (Allah) of the palace of nine vaults, who, without measure or plumb line, without rule or compass, by His hand of creation, made firm its arched canopy. And endless thanks to that Master of the seven-storied workshop, who, with His hand of

power, kneaded the clay of Adam and in him displayed His art and novelty. And endless blessings upon that Self-Existent One, whose munificence, like the waves of the sea, brought forth humankind into the plain of existence from the hidden world of nonbeing...”

Powered by the *tawhidic* spirit, Sinan regarded his enormous talent as a gift from God which he strove to perfect for no other reason except to serve God. He erected so many buildings of different types only that they be used for glorifying the Holy Being, and that they become a tangible proof of God’s *tawhid*, greatness, infinity and permanence, and of man’s and built environment’s inconsequentiality, impermanence and relativity. Sinan (2006) thus wrote: “Thanks be to God, to this humble servant it became an art to serve in so many a house of God... I looked upon all creation as a lesson, and completely understood it has no permanence. I laid the foundations of many buildings. (Doomed to) annihilation, man does not endure. The pavilion of my body began to crumble. I suffered pain in its fetters. The sorrows of fortune my beard turned gray. My body trembles from fear of God. Think not that my bended form is an arch. It is a bridge of passage to grief and sorrow. Brother, in order to pass to the next world, to this vault of fate’s pavilion I bowed my head. Thanks be to God that I am a righteous man! In my art, I am upright and firm.”

CONCLUSION: THE CHARACTER OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Based on the Islamic principle of *tawhid* and its dominant influence on the culture and civilization of Islam, Islamic architecture could be perceived as a type of architecture whose functions and, to a lesser extent, form, are inspired primarily by Islam. Islamic architecture facilitates, fosters and stimulates the Muslims’ *ibadah* (worship) activities, which, in turn, account for every moment of their earthly lives. Islamic architecture can come into existence only 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 (www.isesco.org), 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 thus 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 exist 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. (Ben Hamouche, 2000) A rift or a conflict between the two is bound to lead to a conflict of some far-reaching psychological proportions in buildings users. This way, the roles of form become equivalent to the roles of function.

Islamic architecture is not concerned about the form of buildings only. (Creswell, 1989) 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 fine blend of all

these factors which are interwoven with the treads of the belief system, principles, teachings and values of Islam.

It goes without saying, therefore, that without Islam there can be no Islamic architecture. Likewise, without true Muslims who in their thoughts, actions and words epitomize the total message of Islam, there can be no Islamic architecture either. Islamic architecture is a framework for the implementation of Islam, a framework which exists in order to facilitate, encourage and promote such an implementation. Hence, no properly perceiving, creating, comprehending, studying or even using Islamic architecture can be possible in isolation from the total framework of Islam: its comprehensive worldview, ethos, doctrines, laws, practices, genesis and history. (Titus, 1976) Any attempt or method that defies this rational principle is bound to end up in a failure generating in the process sets of errors and misconceptions. Indeed, the existing studies on Islamic architecture, by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike, and the ways in which Islamic architecture is taught and practiced today, are the best testimony to the confusion that surrounds the theme of Islamic architecture, as both a concept and sensory reality.

Prior to the colonization era, Islamic architecture was an integral and spontaneous segment of the Islamic reality, just like any other cultural and civilizational aspect of Islam as an all-inclusive divine inspiration and guidance. People did not even bother to call it as such (raging debates as to the meaning of “Islamic” and “Muslim” architecture and their similarities and differences, denote a novel phenomenon (Omer, 2009; Thuwayni, www.medinanet.org)). Islamic architecture, or the ways people perceived, planned, designed, built and used buildings, was regarded as an indispensable part of an Islamic lifestyle that the Islamic perceptions of life and its myriad conceptual and sensory realities have been shaping for centuries. Truly, Islamic ways of designing and making buildings were seen as that lifestyle itself which in art and architecture took on some of the most expressive forms. The world of Islamic architecture was both the solemn identity and testimony of Islam and the true record of the life of Muslims and their civilizational awareness and achievements.

However, following the painful colonization era and its equally painful aftermath, Islamic architecture, just like a majority of the components of Islamic culture and civilization, was both

distorted and virtually lost. Now when the Muslims are increasingly experiencing an Islamization awakening, the topic of Islamic architecture is being gradually resurrected too. Although the process is very sluggish, there are many signs on the horizon that inspire, encourage and breed confidence.

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. (Omer, 2009)

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