

# **MIHRAB DESIGN AND ORNAMENTATION OF SELECTED MOSQUES IN MALAYSIA**

**Rosniza binti Othman**

## **ABSTRACT**

Mosque design should not be seen from just the external physical by itself, but the effective use of its interior must also be taken into consideration. This study is quite thorough in formulating a set of guiding principles through literature and site observations of selected mosques in Malaysia that are built from 1728 until 2005. Mihrab, which is impregnated by the Qibla wall, exists in almost all mosques built around the globe, carrying vital functions of orientating the Muslim prostration activities in mosques towards the *Ka'aba* in Mecca whilst providing the very own space for Imam in congregations. This thesis synthesizes Mihrab through the analysis of its design and ornamentation from the selected 23 historical and contemporary mosques in Malaysia. First of all, this study looks at Mihrab as a focal point that needs to be emphasized with a high degree of visibility by examining the mosque layout especially at the prayer hall area, where the prostration activities must be aided by mosques liturgical elements such as Mihrab and Qibla wall. Secondly, the evolution of Mihrab form is seen from the typological study that gives the styles of Mihrab employed in Malaysian mosques. The findings show that Malaysian Mihrabs and Qibla walls were not only styled with influences from abroad as there are styles uniquely originated and associated with the Malays. Thirdly, observation on the ornamentation of Mihrab and Qibla wall has revealed that Malaysian mosques have their own tell tale motifs of vegetation that portray Malaysian identity in its own special way. Study on Mihrab proves that cultural and social values of the local Muslims are still significant even though Malaysia perceived influences from Indians, Arabs and Chinese traders, including the British colony.

**University Of Malaya**