

Islam & Housing

By:

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To my wife, children, parents and in-laws

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Introduction

The house is a microcosm of culture and civilization because the primary elements of society, individuals organized along with the family lines, are born, raised and educated in them. The strength of the institutions of the family and house denotes the strength of a society and the verve of its cultural and civilizational agenda. Similarly, frailties in the institutions of the family and house denote frailties in a society and in its cultural and civilizational agenda.

The house dominion is where people rise and fall, that is to say, where people either succeed or fail in managing and conducting the most crucial aspects of their lives. Housing is where the epicenter of the rise and fall of cultures and civilizations lies. Thus, some of the chief causes of the decline of Islamic culture and civilization, if properly examined, could be related, one way or another, to the complex subject of housing and its own decline and its causes. Likewise, some of the main cures and catalysts for the revival of Islamic culture and civilization could be found right in the subject of reviving genuine Islamic housing. Indeed, Islamizing housing today could be a turning point, as well as an engine of growth, insofar as a total recovery and revival of Muslim cultural and civilizational consciousness and involvement at a world stage is concerned.

This book discusses the subject of housing in Islam, as both a concept and a sensory reality. The book seeks to enhance the awareness, both of the housing professionals and general readership, as to the importance of correctly conceptualizing, creating and using Islamic domestic architecture, especially at the present when the signs of a Muslim cultural and civilizational re-awakening are becoming increasingly evident. The nature of the book, along with its contents, references, methodology and conclusions, is conceptual and philosophical, rather than empirical. Still, however, the book contains myriads of practical suggestions as to the ways Islamic housing is to be conceived, produced and utilized.

The book is divided into three chapters, namely, “The Holy Qur’an on housing”, “The lessons of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)¹ in housing”, and “Muslims and housing today”.

The following issues, mainly, are extensively covered in the book: the Islamic house as a family development center; the Islamic

¹ “pbuh” stands for “peace be upon him” which Muslims are strongly advised to utter whenever a reference to Prophet Muhammad is made.

house as a shelter and private sanctuary; Islamic housing and the issues of privacy, recreation, aesthetics, social integration and comprehensive excellence; the form and function in the Islamic house; the relationship between the house institution and the rest of societal institutions in developing Islamic society; Islamic housing between yesterday and today; the relationship between the state of education and the state of housing in the Muslim world; necessary steps towards a contemporary Islamic housing; some practical suggestions for designing Islamic houses today.

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Finally, I welcome any constructive and academic suggestion concerning the book's content, such as my methodology, arguments, inferences, and the nature of the collected data and my understanding and interpretation of them.

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