

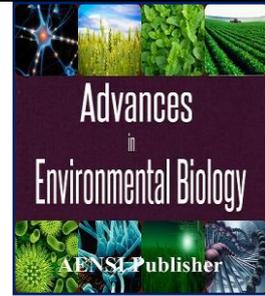


AENSI Journals

## Advances in Environmental Biology

ISSN-1995-0756 EISSN-1998-1066

Journal home page: <http://www.aensiweb.com/AEB/>



## Establishing Malaysia Islamic Garden Based On Quranic Paradise Imagery: Descriptive Analysis From Tafsir Surah Waqiah

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article history:**

Received 28 September 2015

Accepted 15 November 2015

Available online 24 November 2015

**Keywords:**

Islamic garden, Quranic Paradise Imagery, Islamic value, Garden design

### ABSTRACT

The Muslims emphasized the restrictions to dress the garden and keep it-man the steward. The design of the Islamic gardens influenced with specific intents in mind, relating certain ideological principles and objectives rooted in the Islamic faith and the Muslim culture using distinctive design elements. However, Quranic paradise imaginary provides a foundation for understanding Islamic Gardens as clearly shared by established Islamic Gardens such as the gardens of Persia, Mughal India and Moorish Spain. Accordingly, traditional Islamic Garden applied the typical design elements of an Islamic garden for instance the water features, courtyards, trees, flower and calligraphy on walls. The earlier civilization and arid environment are the factors that may have prejudiced the design of the historic Islamic gardens. An ideal design of the Islamic Garden should be considered others criteria such as value in Islamic teaching. A qualitative research which involves content analysis and descriptive throughout literatures of Islamic teaching and descriptive analysis through tafsir of Syed Qutb 'In the Shade of the Quran' is applied. A framework of Islamic garden throughout Islamic values is formulated. The outcome of this study determination contributes to the body of knowledge by proposing a new framework of Islamic Garden that suitable to the Malaysia context.

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**To Cite This Article:** Safwah Mohamed Kamil and Mohd Yazid Mohd Yunos, Establishing Malaysia Islamic Garden Based On Quranic Paradise Imagery: Descriptive Analysis From Tafsir Surah Waqiah. *Adv. Environ. Biol.*, 9(23), 115-119, 2015

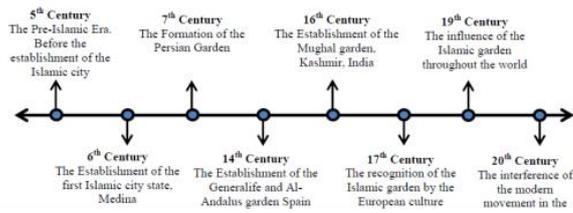
## INTRODUCTION

The Islamic garden was the earthly image of Paradise. The pre-Islamic Persian gardens derived the garden and tried to recreate the world within an enclosed space. After the conquest of Persia by the Arabs in the 7th century [1], not only was the Persian garden itself influenced by Islam philosophy, but this erudite form of garden spread throughout the Islamic world. It became the fabled Moorish gardens in Southern Spain the Generalife Alhambra as well as the basis of the Moghul gardens in Kashmir and India. Through these Spanish gardens the impression of the Islamic garden spread to the New World where its influence can still be traced in the Spanish colonial gardens of the South West, the Revival gardens of the early 20th century, especially in California, and even in the spare modern style of the Mexican landscape architect Luis Baragan[2]. The plea to the senses and the simplicity of form of the Islamic garden is well adapted to the creation of peaceful and restorative outdoor spaces in the modern world.

### 2.0 History of Islamic Garden:

The term Islamic garden was first acknowledged during the establishment of the Persian garden in the seventh century. The inspiration for the Islamic garden, first catch the attention of the European culture during the 17th century[3]. The Islamic garden is perceived as one of the seductive symbols of a new exotic world, describes as a place where the novel taste for space and decoration was freely expressed. The influences of the Islamic garden continue throughout the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century, before it slowly disappears due to the modern movement. The flow of the development of the Islamic garden is presented as follows [4]:

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**Fig. 1:** The development of Islamic garden

### 2.1 Characteristic of Islamic Garden as a Paradise:

The earliest design of the Islamic garden emphasized on the concept of privacy in the garden design [5]. Throughout the century, the implementation of the Islamic garden has slowly been adapted into the garden design. There are several prominent Islamic garden recognized after the establishment of the Persian garden which is the Mughal garden, Kashmir and Al-Andalus, Spain. The term 'Islamic' by Gulzar Haider [11]. The basis on an Islamic environment or garden is not through the development of patterns or structures [6].

The idea of 'Paradise' as a reward for the Muslim faithful was the basic concept developed by Prophet Muhammad from the beginning of his apostolic mission in Mecca [7]. This was more than an abstract vision of future bliss because the Prophet made many specific statements as to the garden's iconography, topography, its nature and its inhabitants. Since then these descriptions have played an important role in the Muslim ideology in relation to the built environment [13]. Moreover, The Quranic descriptions of the celestial gardens are consistent to convey an impression of greenery, overflowing fountains, rivers, foods and sensual beauty to be found in that place. They are illustrated as 'enclosed' spaces that you have to enter, where you shall 'dwell in'.

However, the atmosphere that the garden encourages is the key element that defines the Islamic garden [4]. It is the environment that stimulates the memory of God and displays the values embedded the concepts of Tawhid (ones of God), Khalifah (vicegerent), Khilqat (environment), Jihad (devotion), Adl (fairness), Ibadah (worship), Ilm (knowledge) and Jamal (beauty) highlighted in the al-Quran [12]. Therefore, any garden that supports the similar values is considered Islamic [7]. The garden reform the world within an enclosed space, a peaceful world composed of symmetry, water, shade, fruit and fragrance [2].

### 2.2 Garden of Islam and its Interpretation:

Since the arrival of Islam, as a religion in the 7th century. Gardens have been described as a metaphor of Paradise or al-Janna (the garden). Every time heaven is mentioned in the holy book of Quran, there is an explanation of flowing water and fruit bearing trees, signifying their prominence to man. The reward for good deeds according to the Quran is a place of shaded trees, flowing water, gardens with sweet fruits and fragrant flower. As the religion evolved in a desert climate, water became the main resources to conserve and utilize in the most optimum way possible [15]. Also the process of water evaporation from the earth's surface and then coming down in the form of rains has been given great significance, as it marks the arrival of greenery in the most generous manner [8].

The Islamic civilization brought affected changed to the landscape it inhabited [14]. Noted that with the skilful achievement and transportation of water, the parched lands of the middle-east and northern Africa flourished with man-made grassy oases that not only transformed the economy with their agricultural product but also became an influential form of cultural expression. There are many ideas and methods in Islamic gardens seem to originate from Persians [9].

### 2.3 Examination of the Islamic Garden Elements In Quranic Imagery Paradise With An Emphasis On Surah Al-Waqiah:

Islam has continuously revealed the life after death. This tendency can be seen in several Islamic sources such as theosophical manuscripts and fundamental texts. Those occasionally mentioned in the holy Quran about heaven and hell in some of the verses. Surah Al-Waqiah has presented beautiful descriptions of paradise among other metaphorical verses, in which we can find out the basic elements of landscape and garden design.

At the beginning, this paper deals with the history of main elements of Islamic garden such as water in early culture and mythos. Many verses in Holy Quran invite the human to think about the amazing order of this world and creation of skies, earth, mounts, and seas. In Islamic insight, the world phenomena are assumed as signs of the God and one of the ways to achieve unity and recognition of God for thoughtful humans is to journey in horizons and rational wayfaring in divine signs [10].

Thereupon, we also review the Islamic principle of paradise to realize the main concept and design features of it mentioned in Quran. The elements and environment drawn from the Quranic verses for Islamic garden design are given in figure and table below.

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْأَخْرَبِ ۖ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ۖ مُّتَكَبِرِينَ عَلَيْهَا  
 مُتَقَدِّمِينَ ۖ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ۖ بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ  
 وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ ۖ لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنَزَّفُونَ ۖ وَفَنَكِهَاتٍ  
 ۖ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ۖ وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ۖ وَخَوْرٌ  
 عَيْنٍ ۖ كَأَمْثَلِ اللَّوْزِ الْأَمْكُونِ ۖ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۖ  
 ۚ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا ۖ إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ۖ

*On studded thrones. Reclining on them, facing each other. Surrounded by immortal boys. Carrying bowls and pitchers – and cups filled with wine flowing before them. Their heads shall not ache with it, nor shall they lose their senses. And fruits that they may like. And meat of birds that they may wish. And gorgeous eyed fair maidens. Like pearls safely hidden. The reward for what they did. They will not hear any useless speech in it, or any sin. Except the saying, “Peace, peace.”*

**Fig. 2:** Surah Al-Waqia’h [56:15-26]  
 (Source: Sayyid Qutb, 2012)

وَأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۖ مَا أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۖ فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ  
 وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ۖ وَظِلٍّ مُّمدَّدٍ ۖ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ۖ وَفَنَكِهَاتٍ  
 ۖ كَثِيرَةٍ ۖ لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ۖ وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ۖ إِنَّا  
 أَنشَأْنَهُنَّ إِنْفَاءً ۖ فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ۖ عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ۖ  
 لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۖ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأُولِينَ ۖ وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَخْرَبِ  
 ۖ وَأَصْحَابِ الْقِمَالِ ۖ مَا أَصْحَابِ الْقِمَالِ ۖ فِي سَعْمٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ۖ

*And those on the right - how (fortunate) are those on the right! Among thorn-less lote-trees. And clusters of banana plants. And in everlasting shade. And in perpetually flowing water. And plenty of fruits. That will neither finish, nor ever be stopped. And raised couches. We have indeed developed these women with an excellent development. So made them as maidens. The beloved of their husbands, of one age. For those on the right.*

**Fig. 3:** Surah Al-Waqia’h [56:27-38]  
 (Source: Sayyid Qutb, 2012)

Table 1: Simulation of the Quranic verses derived from Surah Al-Waqiah

Verses	Tafsir Fizilalil Quran	Simulation of Quranic verses	Element/ Ambient
56:15-16	<i>On studded thrones. Reclining on them, facing each other.</i>	Impressive, Serenity	Facilities
56:17	<i>Surrounded by immortal boys.</i>	Endless, Infinite	
56:36-38	<i>We have indeed developed these women with an excellent development. So made</i>	Balance	

	<i>them as maidens. The beloved of their husbands, of one age. For those on the right.</i>		
56:8-21	<i>Carrying bowls and pitchers and cups filled with wine flowing before them. Their heads shall not ache with it, nor shall they lose their senses. And fruits that they may like. And meat of birds that they may wish.</i>	Prosperous, Enjoyment, Delight, Balance	Water, Fruit, Animal, Plantation
56:28-34	<i>And those on the right - how (fortunate) are those on the right! Among thorn-less lote-trees. And clusters of banana plants. And in everlasting shade. And in perpetually flowing water. And plenty of fruits. That will neither finish, nor ever be stopped. And raised couches.</i>	Purity, Clarity, Glorify	Water, Flower, Fragrance, Plantation
56:22-24	<i>And gorgeous eyed fair maidens. Like pearls safely hidden. The reward for what they did.</i>	Beauty, Grandeur	People, Society
56:35	<i>We have indeed developed these women with an excellent development.</i>		
56:25-27	<i>The reward for what they did. They will not hear any useless speech in it, or any sin. Except the saying, "Peace, peace."</i>	Calmness, peaceful, Serenity	Conversation, Discussion

### 3.0 Methodology:

In this paper, descriptive analytical method has been employed to conduct the study with a focus on verses of Surah Al-Waqiah throughout the Tafsir of Fi Zilail Quran or In the Shade of the Quran. Paradise imagery of quranic verses as an effective means of extracting the resource selected in the Surah Al-Waqiah such as the environment and element in the paradise are explained. The understanding of spatial planning and design are interpreted and described. The aiming is to introduce the Islamic garden concepts derived from Quranic verses, where the arrangement allow their pureness thought and to achieve a state of calm and spirituality.

The approach of data collection for this study is using three independent sources which are from expert semi structured interview, site observation and visual documentation. From these inquiry methods the data will be collected, analyzed and reported to achieve the final conclusion. Subsequently, experts will have the discussion by referring to the framework of Islamic garden which is formulated from the suggested conclusion. Any suggestion and recommendation from the expert will be openly debated till a final consensus is achieved.

### 4.0 Discussion And Conclusion:

This paper reviews the theoretical background of elements engaged in the Islamic Garden such as trees and water and environment such as calmness, beauty and balance. Then the philosophical implications of these elements are explained reference to the Al-Waqiah of the Holy Quran.

Therefore, throughout the understanding Tafsir of the Fizilal Quran those elements and surrounding of paradise imagery of Surah Al-Waqiah as in the table below:

**Table 2:** Finding of the Quranic paradise imagery derived from Surah Al-Waqiah

No	Element / Ambient	Characteristic
1	Facilities	Impressive, serenity, exciting
2	Comfort and balance	Amazing, Sensational
3	Water, Fruit, Animal, Plantation	Never-ending, lush and greenery
4	People, Society	Stunning, unity
5	Conversation, Discussion	Noble, worthy, educated

Furthermore in the Surah Al-Waqiah, a paradisiacal garden is described as an unlimited paradise and secures space, with diverse trees planted in specific locations, accessed to through eight gates. From these finding, it is expected that at the end of study a framework of Islamic Garden principles based on applying the

ideological principle in Islamic faith and Quranic paradise imagery will be formulated. The outcome will contribute to the body of knowledge by proposing a new framework of Islamic Garden that suitable to the Malaysia context.

As a conclusion, an Islamic garden should be design based on district design elements, its contextual, local culture and ideological principles rooted in Islamic faith to enhance garden space for recreational and restoration function. The general Islamic garden principles and Quranic paradise imagery derived from verse of Quran can help people to establish systems, regulations, attitudes and views in order to understand and control their worldly life in accordance with their needs, region and time. Moreover, the responsive authority has to come out with a specific guideline that can be applied in improving our Islamic garden design. The ideas of implementing the Islamic garden into the garden in Malaysia is perceived as relevant and encourage effort to support the governance approach in creating an Islamic environment. This study also indicates that as Muslim landscape architects have always tried to develop the landscape architecture and design principles for their garden design from the verses of the holy Quran.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank the funding bodies of this research: Universiti Putra Malaysia under UPM TRGS Grant.

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