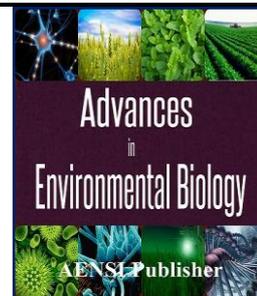




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Examination of The Ideology of The Calmness Concept Based on Quranic Paradise Imagery Towards Establishing An Environmental Islamic Garden In Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The design of the Islamic garden is influenced by specific meanings in mind, relating certain ideological rooted in Islamic faith and Muslim culture using distinct design elements. Quranic paradise imagery 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. This paper presents ideology of the calmness concept in the context of a Quranic illustrated paradise that mentioned in the some Surah verses. The aim of this paper is to emphasis the ideology of the calmness concept in response to the environmental Islamic Garden in Malaysia. A qualitative research which involves content analysis and descriptive is employed to conduct the research. It is expected that the paper can relate to the impression of Islamic garden value as an inspiring landscape design in creating an environmental Islamic Garden in Malaysia.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the arrival of Islam as a religion in the 7th century C.E., Gardens have been described as a metaphor of Paradise or *al-janna* (the garden). Every time heaven is mentioned in the holy book of Qur'an, there is a description of flowing water and fruit bearing trees, signifying their importance to man. The reward for good deeds according to the Qur'an is a place of shaded trees, flowing water, gardens with sweet fruits (*bostan*) and fragrant flowers (*gulistan*). As the religion evolved in a desert climate, Water became the main resource to conserve and utilise in the most optimum way possible. Also, the process of water evaporation from the earth's surface and then coming down in the form of rains has been given great importance, as it marks the arrival of greenery in the most bountiful manner [1].

2.0 Understanding of Islamic Garden As A Paradise:

Paradise is the embodiment of success, the greatest of reward and the ultimate achievement. Allah (swt) rewards His obedient servants with Paradise. Narrated by Bukhari, the Prophet (Pbuh) said "No one of you will be saved because of his deeds." They (the Companions) said: "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Not even me, unless Allah bestows mercy upon me," In a prophetic narration, Allah (swt) said to Paradise, "You are My Mercy which I bestow on whoever I wish of My servants,".

Paradise is a place like have we never seen and hardly imagine, eternal bliss and a place that requires us. Gardens have been described as a metaphor of Paradise or *Al-Jannah*. In fact the Arabic word, jannah, means "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 [11]. As the religion evolved in a desert climate, water became the main resources to conserve and utilize in the most optimum way possible. 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 [2].

In this context, Al-Quran plays a very special role that is cited repeatedly. The most significant description of heaven is as a beautiful garden, filled with greenery and flowing water.

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“And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous good deeds, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise). Every time they will be provided with a fruit therefrom, they will say: “This is what we were provided with before,” and they will be given things in resemblance (i.e. in the same form but different in taste) and they shall have therein Azwajun Mutahharatun (purified mates or wives), and they will abide therein forever.”

[Al-Baqarah 2: 25]

“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the Muttaqin (the pious)”

[Al-Imran 3: 133]

“Allah has promised the believers -- men and women, -- Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever, and beautiful mansions in gardens of `Adn (Eden; Paradise). But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success.”

[At-Taubah 9: 72]

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 [3]. 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 [13]. Since then these descriptions have played an important role in the Muslim ideology in relation to the built environment [14]. Moreover, The Quranic descriptions of the heavenly 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. Therefore, any garden that supports the similar values is considered Islamic [5]. The garden changes the whole world within an enclosed space; a peaceful world composed of symmetry, water, shade, flowers, fruit and fragrance [6].

2.1 Calmness in Islam:

Calmness has been mentioned as one of the greatest rewards of Jannah (*paradise*). It is something that we can never truly have in this reality world, because there is always a need to chase or do more things that we think will satisfy us. But in Jannah, we will finally experience this eternal bliss.

Those who believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. [Ar-Rad 13:28]

The calmness of the heart is a stage beyond happiness and that only comes through true worship and remembrance of the Almighty. When we acquire to look at things positively it draws us closer to the Almighty. Once we engage in the remembrance of the Almighty, we attain the calmness of the heart [12].

The fact that Paradise is a garden is stressed with both of these names prominence the beauty that gardens have. Nowadays, the sight of greenery, flowers and trees brings about calmness and tranquility to the heart[14]. Paradise is a place full of green trees, beautiful flowers, and trellised gardens. Not only beautiful in appearance, but also beautiful in the emotions it initiates.

2.2 Calmness in the Garden of Islam:

Entire calmness and relaxation is one of the greatest gifts of Paradise. It is something that we can never truly have in this world, because there is always a need to chase or do more things that we think will satisfy us. But in Paradise, we will finally experience this eternal bliss. There are some verses of surah Al-Ghasyiah mentioned and described the calmness of the paradise environment [15].

Table 1: Simulation of the Quranic verses derived from Surah Al-Ghasyiah [88: 10-16]

Verses	Tafsir Ibn Kathir	Simulation of Quranic verses
88 : 10	<i>In a lofty Paradise.</i>	Elevated and brilliant, secure in their dwellings.
88 : 11	لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَآغِيَةً <i>Where they shall neither hear harmful speech nor falsehood.</i>	They will not hear in the Paradise that they will be in, any foolish word. This is as Allah says.
88 : 12	فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ <i>Therein will be a running spring</i>	Flowing freely. This is mentioned with the intent of emphasizing affirmation. It is not intended to mean that there is only one spring. So here it refers to springs collectively. Thus, the meaning is that in it (Paradise) are flowing springs. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said.
88 : 13	فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ	Lofty, delightful, numerous couches, with elevated ceilings.

	<i>Therein will be thrones raised high.</i>	Upon which will be seated wide-eyed, beautiful maidens. They have mentioned that whenever the friend of Allah wishes to sit on these lofty thrones, they (the thrones) will lower themselves for him.
88 : 14	مَوْضُوعَةٌ أَكْوَابٌ وَ <i>And cups set at hand.</i>	Drinking containers that are prepared and presented for whoever among their masters (i.e., the people of Paradise) wants them.
88 : 15	وَنَمَارِقٌ مَّصْفُوفَةٌ <i>And Namariq, set in rows.</i>	Ibn `Abbas said, "An-Namariq are pillows." This was also said by `Ikrimah, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, As-Suddi, Ath-Thawri and others. Concerning Allah's statement.
88 : 16	مَبْثُوثَةٌ زُرَابِيٌّ وَ <i>And Zarabi, spread out (Mabthuthah)</i>	Ibn `Abbas said, "Az-Zarabi are carpets." This was also said by Ad-Dahhak and others. Here the word Mabthuthah means placed here and there for whoever would like to sit upon them.

From the translation of the surah Al-Ghasyiah above, further Quran paradise imagery has fundamental descriptions of the condition of the people of Paradise on the Day of Judgment and the appearance of the paradise that awaits the faithful, what it contains, and the delights.

3.0 Methodology:

In this paper, descriptive analytical method has been employed to conduct the study with a focus on verses of Surah Al-Ghayiah. Paradise imagery of the quranic verses as an effective means of extracting the resource selected in the Surah Al-Ghasyiah such as the environment and element of the calmness of the paradise are explained. The aiming is to introduce the calmness concept of the Islamic garden derived from Quranic verses, where the arrangement allow their pureness thought and to achieve a state of calm and spirituality.

4.0 Discussion And Conclusion:

This paper reviews the theoretical background of the concept involved in the Islamic Garden environment such as calmness that can bring a sense of relaxation. Then the implications of this concept are explained reference to the surah Al-Ghasyiah of the Holy Quran.

Therefore, throughout the understanding of Tafsir Ibn Kathir the concept of the calmness of Islamic Garden were defined based on this paradise imagery of Surah Al-Ghasyiah as in the table below:

Table 2: Finding of the Quranic paradise imagery derived from Surah Al-Ghasyiah [88: 10-16]

Verses	Simulation of the ayat	Description
88:10	<i>Elevated and brilliant,</i>	Garden was mentioned located in the high gardens, the high places describe as respectable. The garden on top of a hill has the most beautiful part, the better scenery view.
88:11	<i>No foolish word,</i>	No bad talk in Jannah (Gardens of Paradise). Wherein you will hear no unsuitable speech. So a gift in Paradise is that you hear no bad speech. Where the place is peace and calmness.
88:12	<i>Flowing spring,</i>	You are on a high garden, with water springs flowing (top of a waterfall). The people of Paradise/Jannah are living on high gardens, with beautiful scenery, on top of a spring waterfall with a lot of cool water flowing.
88:13	<i>Lofty thrones,</i>	The garden you live in is high, with an amazing view, with a higher seat to see that view, of everything that you own, the results of your efforts of working hard in this life.
88:14	<i>Drinking container,</i>	Continuously they are placed for you to drink from. Whereas everything in Jannah is free because of your efforts to please Allah, (He rewards you with an endless reward.)
88:15	<i>And cushions set in rows,</i>	Small pillow (according to Lisab al `Arab dictionary).So that small pillow you might put on your high couch/bed to feel even more comfortable. A lot of pillows. Everywhere you look, you're finding relaxation.
88:16	<i>And rich carpets spread out.</i>	<i>mabthoothah</i> – spread as far as the eye can see. Cushions and rugs, as far as you can see in your big living room. Allah is giving people what people look for even till this Day and throughout human history;

Furthermore in this surah, a paradisiacal garden is described as calmness and peaceful space and unlimited paradise, a high garden with a spring waterfall, a pleasant home with luxurious glasses of the best drinks and relaxation of the best beds, pillows and carpets. Everything that everyone have ever wanted.

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, this study indicates that as Muslim landscape architects have always tried to derive the landscape architecture and design criteria for their garden design from the verses of the holy Quran.

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