

## Achieving positive energy in living spaces by applying the true spirit of Islam in harmony with design

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### Abstract

How living spaces affect their occupants is an impression that runs through many cultures and groups around the globe. This paper is based on an attempt to establish a link between Islamic architecture, Chinese culture and Minimalism in terms of positive place energy. Minimalism in architecture can be summed up in Mies Van Derrohe's statement Less is More. The aim of this research was to understand how minimalism meets the spirit of asceticism in Islam such as simplicity, truth, and mysticism, under which the idea of asceticism falls, and Islamic truths such as the haqeeqa, and Taammul meditation. The research was descriptive in nature and the data for the research was drawn from previous literature, journals and from the Holy Qur'an. The research establishes the notion of universality of Islamic notions in the field of architecture and makes recommendations based on the findings of this research.

**Key words:** Minimalism, asceticism, truth haqeeqa, Taammul ; meditation

### 1. Introduction

Contemporary building designs have been criticized for having little or no reference to the natural and spiritual context in which the building stands (Shirazi, 2018). Such neglect had probably contributed to failures of buildings to function as intended. We have some information about traditional approaches based on old practices that take care of every aspect but have not seemed to be considered, or just forgotten. In many instances, certain failures of are just unexplainable. Thus, it would be beneficial to rediscover the ancient systems that may be useful for consideration during the design process.

David Koh, an acclaimed environology master, has stated; 'When people built the house, the energy inside the house is static (Lah et al., 2015). Once the people live in, the energy inside the house is dynamic. People may affect the building, and the building may affect the people. And it's

not positive thinking that the people need, but it's energy that makes people think positively" (Lah et al., 2015).

So what is this Islamic architecture approach and what is true Islamic architecture? The Islamic architecture approach system is a guide to satisfy the human's enthusiasm for a more successful life; harmonious, healthy, upholding and advancement (Lah et al., 2015). It provides a set of followed rules to have the best alignment of the proposed building with the entire universe. It is on account of this that the first role of the Qur'an and Sunnah as the sources and foundation of Islamic architecture is to afford a perfect guidance on how Muslims are to perceive creating, using and possessing architecture. That is an integral part of the total Islamic worldview and belief system. The two holy sources also educate on the importance of architecture and its purpose in life. The goals of architecture are closely linked to man's life purpose and goals and are treated as such. The two in fact complement each other. Thus, a Muslim architect should perceive himself firstly as a servant of God, then as an architect (Kateb, 2018).

A Muslim architect should see his profession as no more than a means towards realizing his noble terrestrial mission as a vicegerent and servant of his Creator and Master (Kateb, 2018; Omer, 2020). In general, the purpose and goal of every Muslim's professional life cannot deviate from the purpose and goal of his total existence. Architecture is a form of service to people, the environment and God. As a few examples, the Qur'an and Sunnah do not speak about how to plan and design house entrances and windows, but they speak about the issues and activities that are pertinent to the subject matter; nor do they address how to organize inner spaces inside a house, but they speak about scores of issues that are related to that particular topic; nor do they speak about the ways mosques are to be planned and designed, but they speak about mosque activities and various other matters that are relevant to the mosque and its multiple functions as community centers, so they should be duly considered when planning, designing and building mosques; nor do they speak about how to make buildings sustainable and environment friendly, but they are very much eloquent about the significance and purpose of the environment and our many duties towards it, so much so that one gets a feeling that Islam is truly a religion of environmental protection and that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the first de facto environmentalist; nor do they speak about how to make buildings perfectly safe, secure and clean, but they are categorical in establishing safety, security and cleanliness as foremost principles of Islam and, at the same time, as the most important standards of living (Omer, 2019;2020).

Islamic architecture is the complete set of architecture that developed from Islam as a social, cultural, political and religious life system, hence the term includes religious buildings as well as historical expressions in addition to many modern buildings such as the production of all places that have come under different levels of Islamic influence. The term is taken today to denote On the architecture built by Muslims or for Muslims, or that was built in Muslim countries or under an Islamic government (Omer, 2019).

The Prophet Muhammad warned against infatuation with this life and asked Muslims to challenge themselves by doing good and avoiding conflicts (Mortada, 2020). Such a warning is necessary for social justice and solidarity. There is no doubt that the indulgence in using a luxurious lifestyle has dangerous effects on the morals and behavior of individuals and on society as a whole. In Islam, excessive spending is seen as an expression of the individual's preoccupation with form, not substance, with matter rather than spirit (Omer, 2019). And through this past words we can find the relation between Islamic architecture ,Chinese concept of Feng Shui for home design and minimalism and its main Characteristics of house designs (Sia, Yew & Siew, 2018).

In modern architecture, minimalist architecture appears, aiming to achieve a better design through simplicity - simplicity in form, space, material, detail and color. The minimalist architecture shows restraint and delicate exfoliation to the origin of the elements to reach the essence of a thoughtful space.

### **1.1 Problem Statement Significance of the Study**

Our homes are an extension of ourselves and reflect our identity. The most important thing is that a beauty-loving person wants his home to reflect cleanliness, beauty, warmth and love. So Islamic architecture has a common history with great minimalist design ideas, skills and technology from other cultures to reach this goal. The result of the merging between those cultures became the modeling of the distinctive shapes and patterns of these forms of art. During the creation of the apartment design showed here as the case study for comfortable residential space, the spirit of simplicity was likely to be used in its interior design, but elements of other styles were used boldly: which is the addition of the Feng Shui concept of design which was developed in China, it is a part of both technical and partial sciences, but it is mostly a complex philosophy that requires a lot of study to fully understand its intricacies.

What is meant is the interior design that combines the spirit and simplicity of true Islamic architecture, minimalist architecture and Asian Feng Shui culture which is primarily about achieving a comfortable life for a family of four, so all considerations of beauty, simplicity and practicality are carefully taken into account.

This is in contrast to what happens in the Western world where the priority is the value of material comfort in the living environment, while Feng Shui includes physical health, mental health, the relationships of the person who inhabits the space and his personal successes in the mix. Ensuring a successful life within the realm through:

1. Simplicity in the form of function: Design a simple home. A clear, effective and clear plan.
2. Uncomplicated wall finishes.
3. The design plan is based on an open space filled with lots of natural light.
4. Simple details and minimizing everything to reach what is necessary only in terms of form and use.
5. Achieving the visual attraction by focusing on the color and the material and achieving the required personality of the void through the implementation of a tight plan for the color palette and the texture of the materials.
6. "Simplicity is the essence of happiness." Cedric Bledsoe

The following questions guided this study:

R1: Is the current Islamic architecture intended to achieve psychological comfort inside housing as it was supposed to be from the beginning?

R2: To what extent the idea of convergence between Islamic architecture in its initial form and the principles of Feng Shui may succeed in achieving the desired goal of the research?

Islam seeks to reduce life to basic necessities to ensure that a person understands that this life is temporary, and the next (afterlife) life is permanent. Thus true Islamic architecture is, in fact, an authentic minimalist term that seeks to simplify life into necessities. This is the true Islamic architecture that our Master Muhammad advocated and practiced throughout his life. True Islamic architecture should be the ultimate refined minimalist expression.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study:**

The main objective of this research is to prove that there is one goal that may bring together Islamic architecture in its first form with its idea of achieving simplicity in living for a residential space that achieves positive energy that would provide a stimulating environment for work and giving, applying the five elements of Feng Shui to achieve the same goal within residential indoor spaces in particular is to obtain a physical space that is in line with who we are and where we want to be. It is a matter of balancing our energy with that of the homes in which we live - and vice versa. as well as compatibility with the principles of minimalism in design.

## **2. Method**

This research was a descriptive research based on the application of the Feng Shui art of design consideration within residential indoor spaces. The study bases on Feng Shui's art of design to explain how living spaces react with the occupant of the living space. The research went on to explain the interrelationship between designing living spaces based on Feng Shui's art design and Islamic architecture. The five elements of Feng Shui's art design were applied in an Islamic context and further discussed to help the reader understand how the Islamic context of architecture captures the general standard of designing a living space that promotes the wellbeing of an occupant in a living space. A case study of a design for a residential unit for a small family of four was considered.

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. Relevance of applying the Feng Shui art of design consideration within residential indoor spaces:**

This involves studying how things like furniture, ornaments, lighting and plants are placed in a way that affects the homeowner's energy flow. Many theories of Feng Shui theories include what is known as the yang, the yin, and the Five Physical Elements. These origins are from a religious or philosophical tradition of Chinese origin Which aims to achieve the following points in any interior space and make it a better place to live and live (Sia, Yew & Siew, 2018):

- **Expansion** - When the space is tight or too narrow or the wall is too close to the way in (limiting opportunities coming through your door), a mirror is a great way to expand the space. If it is a narrow hallway, place a long mirror along the wall. If you encounter a wall when entering, place a mirror in front of you to make sure you have limitless opportunities!
- **Duplication** - mirrors multiply everything in front of them, so it is necessary to make sure that whatever reflects, is a good thing.
- **Activate** - large mirrors are used to transmit stagnant or suspended energy. In Feng Shui, mirrors represent "water," an element that possesses fluid movement in contrast to the stability that characterizes the earth, and is a more intrinsic and moving element. If you have an area in your space that needs some energy to move around, it is best to hang the mirror so that we can get the energy flowing inside that area again.
- **Lighting** - If you have a corner in a dark room but with a window, place a mirror in front of the window to reflect the sunlight into that dark area.

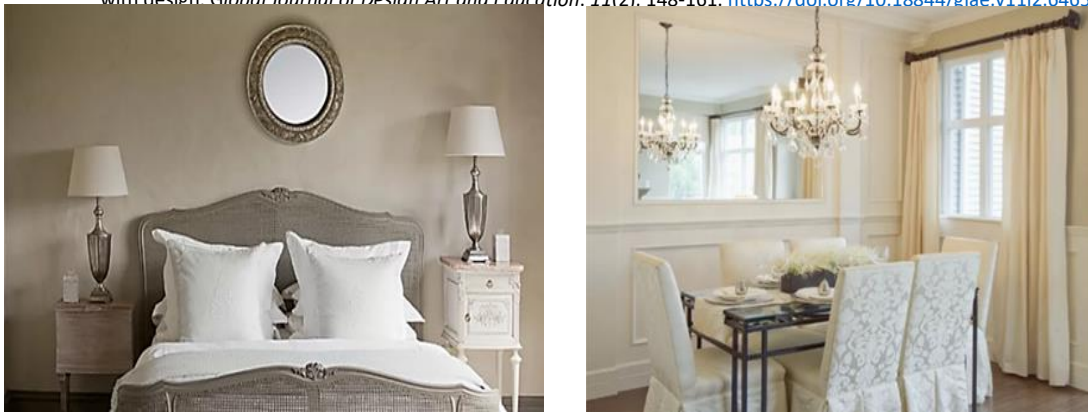


Fig. 1. The best places to place a mirror either in a bedroom or a living area in a residential space

It is a complete system of life if we take into account our Islamic religious view of this life. It is a world of art that I can describe as a message of love for everything that is related to your existence.” It is the most science that approaches to a large extent what our true religion demands of us by calling for tolerance, smiling, and psychological clarity and all those calls that are realized with the purity of the residential and practical environment and the flow of positive energy in it without hindrance.

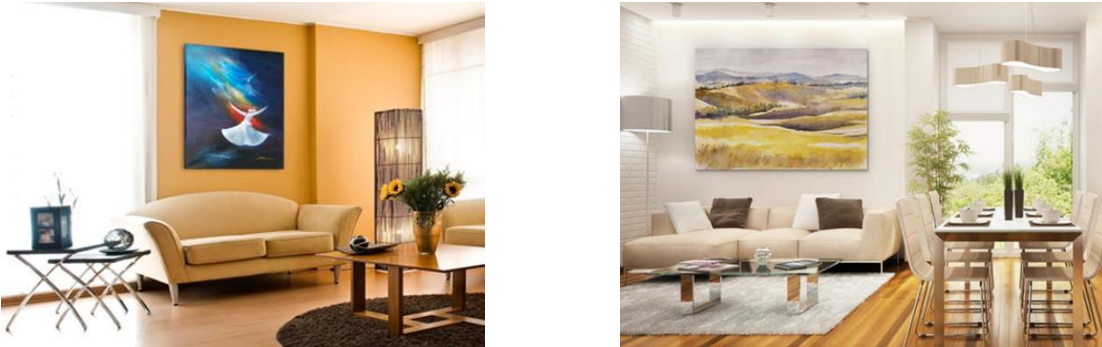


Fig. 2. The importance of allowing the presence of natural lighting in residential spaces

### **3.2. Colors and their connotations in Islamic thought and its role in achieving positive energy in residential spaces:**

Colors occupied a wide space in Islamic thought, so the Noble Qur’an mentioned them in more than one place. Literary sources provided abundant information about them, and perhaps the most extensive material on colors we find in the books of translations. Among the most prominent books that looked at colors was the book “Philology of Language” by Al-Thaalabi, which is dedicated to Ibn Sidah. The books of fiqh dealt with colors by talking about the colors of clothes and recorded the colors that are common among people. But when talking about the psychological effect of color and its role in achieving inner peace for residential users, the Holy Quran is the best source to explain that role.

#### **3.2.1. Colors in the Holy Quran:**

In the Noble Qur’an, colors came with expressive, symbolic and sensual connotations, and the word color and its derivatives appeared in nine verses of the Holy Qur’an.

The term colors by plural were mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in seven places in which there are six verses as a sign from God to the seven known color spectrums that make up the white light. The term "color" was mentioned twice in one verse of the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Qur'an mentioned the difference of colors in seven verses indicating the difference in the colors of people, animals, plants, and mountains, and it is noticed that the colors are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the plural more than individuals (Omer, 2019). Perhaps this is due to the fact that life is based on the diversity of colors that achieve beauty and confidence. The Holy Quran mentioned six colors, which are white, green, black, yellow, blue and red.

1. The white color: This color is dear to the soul because it brings comfort and reassurance to it, and it indicates purity and innocence, and this color was a symbol of the supreme divine power in many civilizations and its use was associated with joyful occasions such as weddings, and as a sign of purity.
2. The green color expresses plants, earth and animals, and was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an eight times, and clothing and is associated with the most sacred and stable, which is paradise. The verses emphasize that green is a symbol of love, hope, fertility, goodness, peace, safety and development, and it is a sign of pleasure, happiness, pleasure and complete psychological comfort.
3. The yellow color appeared in the Holy Qur'an in five verses, it gives rise to a warm and acceptable impression and is considered a link between the phenomenon of the sun that gives life and is found in the sun. Children's activity.
4. The red color: It was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an once in describing the mountains in Surat Fater, verse 27, the Almighty's saying: "Did you not see that God sent down water from the sky and brought us out with it fruits of different colors, and from the mountains renewed eggs and reds of different colors and black cores."

In the Almighty's saying that it is one of the most preferred colors by the Arabs, as it symbolizes love and its heat, and it is one of three colors called warm colors, which are red, yellow and purple. These colors are loud and bright.

*The philosophy of colors in Islamic art depends on the feeling and the taste for art and the sense of the importance of color:*

1. The golden color: It is the color of will, glory and wealth
2. White: a sign of purity, light and peace, and it is the color of religious clothing and the color of the first Arab flag
3. Red: the color of happiness and joy, the color of the blood of martyrs, and the color of strength
4. Green: It is the color of resurrection, revival, and renewal, and it is the color of the inhabitants of Paradise
5. Brown: the color of rocks
6. Yellow: the color of sand
7. Blue: the color of sky and water

In order to demonstrate the existence of a link between the cultures represented in Islam and its simplicity and how to achieve psychological peace within the residential space and between Feng Shui in Chinese culture, I will give an example of using elements from both cultures in the interior design of a residential apartment for a family of four:



### 3.3. "Design for a residential unit for a small family of four"

The art of Feng Shui emphasizes that it is necessary to integrate between following tangible physical theories such as colors, lighting, decoration ... etc. from different means and between following intangible theories such as hymns and supplications, imagination and methods in order to reach the best desired results.

Pay attention to what the mirror reflects: objects in front of the mirror spread their energy through it. For example, with a mirror looking out through the window to nature outside, or just a tree in the garden or yard, it can bring positive energy and balance into the home.

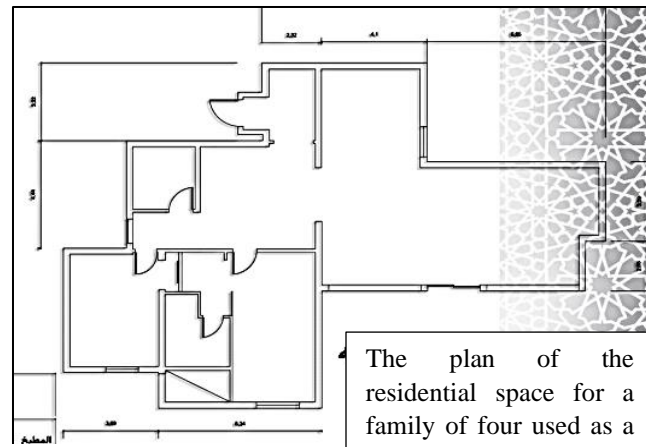


Fig 3(a): The residential space an apartment for a family of four the plan before applying the Islamic and Chinese concept in design.

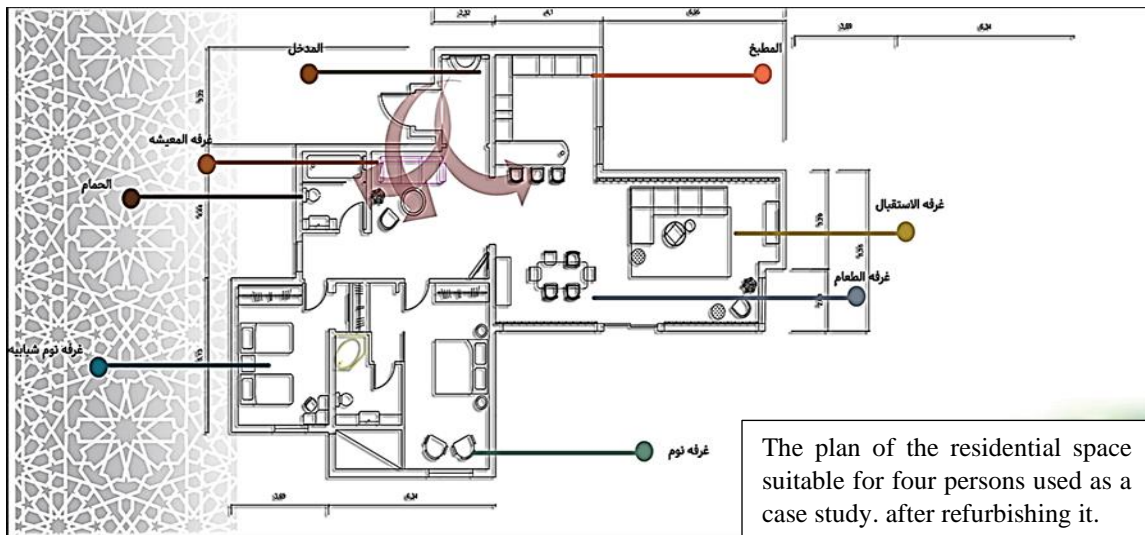


Fig 3 (b): The residential apartment after redesigning it according to the Islamic and Feng Shui style.

But if the unwanted images are reflected through the mirror or they face edges or corners, it diffuses its negative energy and limits the positive waves. Push all the good Feng Shui energy about to enter the house outside of it. Increasing the distance between the front door and the mirror will only change because the mirrors are used to bring energy from the water element in Feng Shui. Mirror placement is very important in order to direct positive energy into the home.



Fig 4. A shot showing the area that follows the entrance to the apartment, where a mirror was placed in it that reflects the loyal painting consisting of beautiful Arabic letters to give positive energy by simply looking at it when entering the house directly.



Fig 5. The living area with its positive color theme design.

According to the Feng Shui rules for a healthy residential space, there are places where mirrors are not desirable to have such as directly facing the door of the house and the mirror facing the front door leads to the effect of the mirror facing the main door, so if you have such a mirror, the best Feng Shui advice is to either remove it completely or reposition the mirror a little bit into a little corner and doesn't directly reflect the door (Sia, Yew & Siew, 2018).

Alternatively, you could hang it over the bedroom bed or directly in front of the bed. And if its presence is necessary in a space, let it serve this space by attracting positive energy to it, such as facing a beautiful and cheerful painting, or plant in a house. An artistic work that creates positivity, a long lighting unit that emits comfortable lighting to reflect all those beautiful things into the part in which it is located in the space.



(6a)



(6b)

Fig 6 (a), (b): The elements that were used to decorate the walls, floors and table of the living room, from carpets occupied with the sacred Japanese flower to the dishes of the fiery color of energy and the use of the beautiful Arabic letter Waw, the two ducks that were placed on the table and it is one of the symbols of positive energy for the peoples of East Asia.





Fig 7. (a) Use additional lighting to increase the illumination of dark places: If you are a fun person and you like your guests to have a good time, decorate the living and dining areas with a lot of yang by using the yellow color, because yellow is a warm color that is happy and makes People are more conversational.

(b) Another shot of the living room of the homeowner, which is characterized by fiery colors and all the emitters of energy stimulating to enjoy while at rest.

The key to a harmonious dining area is to make sure it is not overly crowded. And making sure that people are given plenty of space to get up from the table and walk around freely. It is often helpful to place chairs away from windows. With their back facing the window, someone can sense discomfort, making the dining experience less comfortable than you might expect. And if this dining area is intended for everyday eating rather than entertainment, then the use of blue provides a soothing spirit and relaxing healing for the perfect end of a hard day.



Fig .8. A painting containing the word God is greater to bring in positive energy.



Fig. 9. It is preferable for the dining table to be made of wood and have rounded edges because these things stimulate the energy pathways within the space.

The key to a harmonious dining area is to make sure it is not overly crowded. And making sure that people are given plenty of space to get up from the table and walk around freely. It is often helpful to place chairs away from windows. With their back facing the window, someone can sense discomfort, making the dining experience less comfortable than you might expect. And if this dining area is intended for everyday eating rather than entertainment, then the use of blue provides a soothing spirit and relaxing healing for the perfect end of a hard day (Al-Ittihad newspaper, 2011).

The kitchen in the Feng Shui culture is the most important aspect of the house because it is considered the heart of the vibrant home represented by the healthy food that the household eats and from which the home dwellers start their day. It must be colorful. That the oven does not face a window so that the energy can penetrate outside the house. The most of its corridors should be easy to allow freedom of movement and the materials used are easy to clean because the cleanliness and smell of the kitchen is very important to achieve comfort for the residents of the house, psychological, visual and physical comfort.



(a)



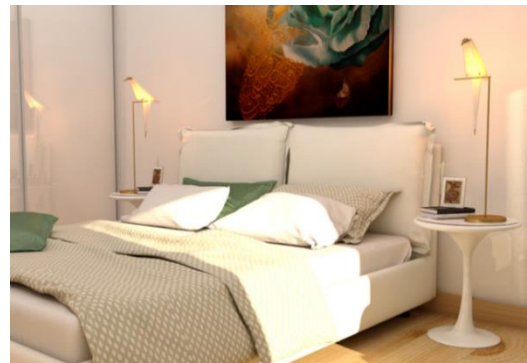
(b)

Fig. 10. (a), (b): Open dining room space to the reception and open kitchen

The bedroom where the body and soul rest from the trouble of work and burdens, as it renews energy and gets rid of any negatives. It is preferable not to hang a mirror above or in front of the bed, but rather a cheerful and positive picture is placed. If you put a mirror in front of the bed, it reflects that cheerful image. It is preferred that there be no barriers between the door and the window. And not to put the bed under the window. There should be no television set, computer, or exercise equipment in the bedroom. Good Feng Shui room energy is destroyed when these items are in your bedroom. Energy needs to circulate around the human body while sleeping, and this is not possible in the absence of a vacuum under the bed.



(a)



(b)

Fig. 11. (a), (b): The bedroom where the body and soul rest from the trouble of work and burdens.



(a)



(b)

Fig. 12. (a), (b). The design of the chandelier belongs to one of the herbs that grows in North America and is used for natural herbal remedies and helps to relax.

There are works of art that bring positive results to a person's life. There are also times when there are works of art that negatively affect his happiness, health, and in some cases, his life. If this energy is positive from a picture, or painting, the flux is positive. If it is negative, then the energy goes this way as well. Even the position of the artwork has implications for what happens in your life and how you see yourself, if money is an issue or if your health suffers, because what you see is often what you get in life.



Fig. 13. The lighting unit used on both sides of the bed is in the shape of a beautiful white bird.



Fig. 14. There are works of art that bring positive results to a person's life.

The relationship of the bed place with the surrounding furnishings inside the bedroom space: It is evident from the previous figures that in the culture of Feng Shui, which aims to achieve positive energy in the place, it is wrong for the bathroom to be located directly behind the bed. It is preferred to have bathroom upholstery elements on other walls. The bed is not facing the door of the room, but it is preferable that it can be seen from the bed's location. It is preferable to have a space on both sides of the bed and have two pieces of furniture to put a pleasant picture on an alarm book, with the edges of that piece being round and blunt so that it harmonizes with the energy currents.



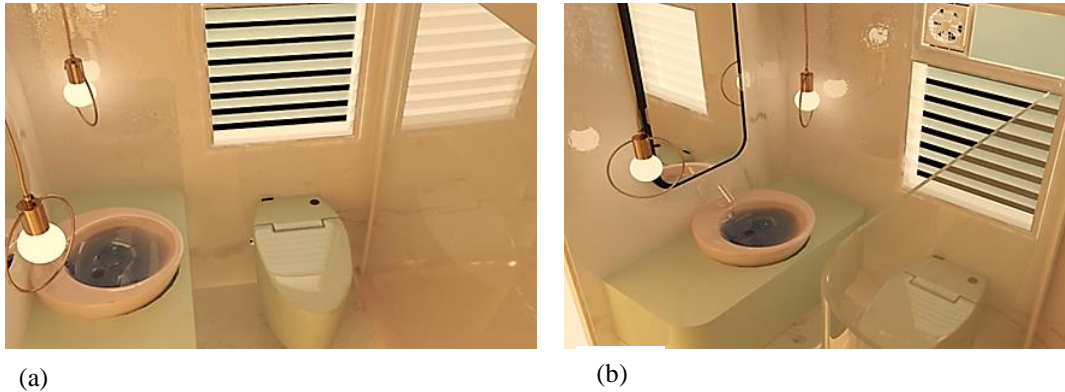


Fig. 15. a, b the guest bathroom, despite its small area, is characterized by cleanliness and calm colors, the presence of an opening for good ventilation.

The guest bathroom, despite its small area, is characterized by cleanliness and calm colors, the presence of an opening for good ventilation. The surfaces of all elements are round and blunt and characterized by ease of cleaning. Any negative smells and energies from the ventilation hatch.

#### 4. Discussion

The principal goal for designing buildings in all cultures is to attain well-being for its occupants (Sia, Yew & Siew, 2018). Therefore and without any doubt, those broad and general Islamic values and tenets, which lie at the core of architecture, can greatly enlighten, enrich and inspire Muslim designers and architects (Omer, 2019;2020). The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w also stated that,

*"There is in the body a clump of flesh - if it becomes good, the whole body becomes good and if it becomes bad, the whole body becomes bad. And indeed it is the heart".*

When talking about the science of "Feng Shui", we must be aware that it is not as it is rumored that it is an herbal remedy (Hong, 2018). But it is a complete system of life if we take into account our Islamic religious view of this life. It is a world of art that I can describe as a message of love for everything that is related to your existence.

It is the sciences that approach to a great extent what our true religion demands of us by calling for tolerance, smiling, and psychological clarity and all those calls that are fulfilled with the purity of the residential and practical environment and the flow of positive energy in it without hindrance to your mental clarity, and it helps to focus on important aspects of your life, which you may have neglected for a long time (Mortada, 2020). Rather, this science pulses with vitality, and it is full of simple ideas that make human life easier, as it is the science and art of a complete system of life.

The same is as the teachings of our Islamic religion, which call for simplicity and get rid of everything that narrows the chest and overcomes grief and distress (Omer, 2019; Mortada, 2020). As well as the idea of the tendency towards independence, which is a call to asceticism and the

spirit of simplicity in all of our daily life needs in order, which are thus requirements that simulate the same requirements of a decent life in the Islamic religion and other monotheistic religions that invite us to be simple in order to obtain the greatest amount of visual and psychological comfort and not to exhaust ourselves in the physical accumulation of things within the spaces that we use, whether at home, work or school, as well as restaurants and public spaces of all kinds.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has revealed the significance of the notion of the universality of the Islamic message for sustainability. In Islam, man is a social being entrusted with a noble mission of responsibly inhabiting and developing the earth. Man's life, accordingly, is all about forging and nurturing relationships, starting with his own self and then with all the other existing spiritual and material, animate and inanimate, realities, and all the way through the horizontal and vertical miscellaneous levels and dimensions of life.

Technological advancements rapidly change, demands of different eras fluctuate, even under the same ecological conditions Climate exigencies ought to be painstakingly heeded to. Applying the Feng Shui method in a residential space requires a total sensory system i.e. sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, which is associated with the interaction between people and the natural environment.

And lastly, human psychology also changes with the changes in the time and space factors, posing a number of exigencies of its own. No architectural plan and design, which served as a solution for an age and a place, can be simply "parachuted" to another age and place without properly modulating it to its rigorous environmental and socio-cultural requirements.

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