WATER IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE: STUDY OF THE WATER DISPENSARY (SABIL)

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ABSTRACT

Water is essential to life and survival, it is not only a functional addition to Islamic architecture but also an integral part of the Islamic religion and beliefs, The Holy Quran states that "Every living thing is made of water", and the importance of this thought is visible in Islam since its used for Ablution five times daily; however, its mentioned in the Sunnah that water conservation is embedded in Islam even if you are living on a shore. The role played by water in Islamic architecture is both symbolic (representing spiritual purity) and practical (weather adjustment). Sabil is one of the emerged Islamic architectures that was used as a water dispenser, where water has been harnessed to serve and provide passers-by, it flourished under the rule of the Mamluks in Egypt where they constructed a standalone Sabil Kuttab, usually inflicted a Kuttab (Quranic School for boys) on top. This paper **investigates** the aesthetic, functional, and symbolic values of water in Islamic architecture, and highlights the value of Sabil as an important element in the Islamic city fall under the charity facilities, **through analytical** description of its architectural as well as the functional, aesthetic, and symbolic aspects which serve the concept of heritage revival by being a source of inspiration.The research **problem** can be framed in a set of questions; What is the importance of water as an essential element of life in Islamic architecture? What is the impact of muslim beliefs on design ? Did the formation of Islamic architecture only consider the functionality of the building and the aesthetic sides, or were hidden religeous beliefs conveyed?.

KEY WORDS

"Sabil, Kuttab, ablution (Wudu), El-Sakka, Shazrawan, Salsabil, Charity Endowments (Wakf), water features"

الملخص:

المياه هي سر الوجود والبقاء، لا تشكل المياه عنصر وظيفي في العمارة الاسلامية بل تحمل قيمة ضمنية نابعة من الاعتقاد الديني. يقول الله عز وجل: (وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاء كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ) الأنبياء/30 ،تتجلى اهمية المياه في

العقيدة الاسلامية في الوضوء وما يحمله من رمزية للطهر، ايضا السنة النبوية الشريفة تأكد وتحث على عدم الاسراف في المياه حتى لو كان الانسان يعيش بجانب نهر جاري.تلعب المياه في العمارة الاسلامية دور جوهري على محورين اساسيين الاول رمزي كونها تمثل في الوضوء النقاء البدني والنفسي ايضا والمحور الثاني على الصعيد الوظيفي كونها تشكل عنصر فعال في تلطيف الجو في البناء سواء داخليا او خارجيا.السبيل هو احد الابنية الاسلامية والتي استخدمت وظيفيا في توزيع المياه قديما على المساكن او عابري السبيل.ازدهر السبيل تصميميا في العصر المملوكي حيث وجد السبيل كمنشئة مستقلة يعلوها الكتاب الذي كان يستخدم لتحفيظ القران. يناقش البحث الجوانب الوظيفية والجمالية كذلك الرمزية للمياه في سياق العمارة الاسلامية وتسلط الضوء على احد اهم المنشات التي تعكس تلك القيم وهوالسبيل والذي يندرج تحت المنشات الخدمية الخيرية من خلال المنهج الوصفي التحليلي يعرض البحث الجوانب الوظيفية والجمالية لمنشئة السبيل وكيف انها صيغت لتلبي ليس فقط البعد الوظيفي والجمالي بل ايضا لتعكس القيم الرمزية النابعة من قيمة المياه في الاسلام.يمكن صياغة مشكلة البحث في صورة عدد من التساؤلات :ما هي اهمية المياه كونها عنصر حيوي لجميع الكائنات في العمارة الاسلامية؟.ما هو مردود العقيدة الاسلامية على مخرجات العمارة في تلك الفترة؟هل راعى المصمم المعماري الجوانب الوظيفية والجمالية فقط ام كان هنالك بعد عقائدي خفي تحكم في المخرجات التصميمية؟

هدف البحث المياه هي سر الوجود والعنصر الحيوي لكل الكائنات الحية ،العقيدة الاسلامية حثت على الحفاظ على المياه في كثر من الايات القرانية والاحاديث النبوية. بل كثير من الأيات توضح القيمة الفلسفية للمياه في الاسلام كونها ترمز للنقاء والطهارة . البحث يهدف الى عرض تحليلي للقيمة المياه في الاسلام وكيف انعكس ذلك على الجانب التصميمي متمثلا في منشئة السبيل. والربط ما بين الفكر العقائدي والمخرجات التصميمية .

منهجية البحث من خلال المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، يتم استعراض وتتبع اهمية المياه في السلام وما تحمله من قيم روحانية وانسانية ، كذلك رمزية المياه في الاسلام. وباتيباع نفس المنهجية يتم عرض منشئة السبيل وعناصرها التصميمية والاستدلال من ذلك على المنهجية الفكرية للمصمم المعماري وتاثرة بالقيم العقائدية.

مصطلحات البحث : "السبيل، الكتاب، الوضوء، شازوران، السقا، سلسبيل، الوقف الخيري. "

1 INTRODUCTION

Water is almost the only colorless chemical-free substance on earth, the fact that it forms 70% of the global surface and about two-thirds of the human body, made it the essentials of life and survival for all Organisms. Throughout history, water has been a fundamental requirement for the existence of humanity. The beginning of settlement and the formation of small communities have always been around water sources streams, rivers, and lakes, indicating how strictly relies on water [1]. Water was observed by ancient philosophers as one of the four primary components of the universe along with earth, air, and fire and, according to the literature; water is a symbol of life [2]. Water has a great attraction for most of the people; they enjoy visiting places where water exists, like seas, rivers, lakes, and waterfalls. Water has a range of contact with people, not only by drinking but a physical connection that leaves kind of happiness and inner satisfaction varies from one to another [3]. The physical characteristics of water have a significant role in stimulating our senses; many studies show

that water is one of the most potent elements affect humans, through a mental communication which enhances human capabilities and performance. This fabulous metal benefits had been recognized and admitted by humans. Therefore, they looked for enhancing their quality of life through integrating water features [4]. Water was used in Islamic architecture to meet functional and aesthetic values, moreover, values emanating from the tolerant Islamic teachings, which urge conservation of water. Islamic designer recognized that their elements of design emanate from Islamic rules; they considered Islam not only a religion but a way of living. That been reflected clearly in most of their architectural. Sabil is one of the architectural element that reflects the design ability to meet societal needs through the realization of religious values and teachings.

Research Objectives

Water is the essentials of life not only for humans, but for all living things. The Islamic creed has urged the importance of water conservation, and many of the verses have pointed to the philosophical values of water in the Islamic faith. The research **Objective** is to present these values stemming from the ideological thought, and how they effectively contributed in the formation of the Islamic architecture space, such as the Sabil building.

Research Methodology

Through **Descriptive analytical** method, this paper **investigates** the aesthetic, functional, and symbolic values of water in Islamic architecture, and highlights the value of Sabil as an important element in the Islamic city fall under the charity facilities. The paper presents the importance of water in Islamic civilization through the **historical approach** and its impact on the Islamic design aspects.

2 WATER IN ISLAM

"Or Who has created the Heavens and the Earth, and Who sends you down water from the sky? Yea, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty of delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them? Can there be another god besides Allah?" (The Ants 27:60)

Water is an integral part of Islam and Islamic beliefs Which has been embedded in the Qur'an and Sunnah[5]. It's a fact that Islam isn't the only religion admitting that water is a pivotal issue. Since Islam arise in the Arabian peninsula; the desert formed the vast majority of its geography, making pre-Islamic Arab tribes travel searching for water resources to establish their territories. Arid land and water scarcity shaped the ruling thought of the tribal Resulting in a Muslim sense of the hidden value for water.The importance of water in Islam stems from

the pivotal role of water in Muslims life both before and after Islam. "*We made from water every living thing*" (The Prophets 21:30) its mentioned in the Qur'an that water forms the life on earth, Encompassing all living creatures and plants even valleys and rivers created by water to lay life on earth. The Arabic word for water, "ma'aa," appear several times in the Qur'an. Islam describes water as being enduring life and ensuring its continuity. The mention of water came not less than sixty times throughout the Qur'an, it frequently referenced through mention of rivers, seas, rain, clouds, and winds [6]. In many Qur'an verses, water has been mentioned as indirect signs of Gods Benevolence and Mercy. The Sunnah came to confirm the vital role of water as a precious resource in the Muslim's life.When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) saw Sa'd performing wudu (ablution), he said: "What is this? You are wasting water." Sa'd replied: "Can there be a waste while performing ablution?" The Prophet replied: "Yes even if you perform it in a flowing river." (Musnad of Imam Ahmed), considering the water as a gift even if a man performs an act of worship.Many positions in Qur'an and sunnah demonstrate the significance of water and reflects its value in Muslims life apart from being a fundamental of every living thing. However, there was dependably a mysterious value for water in Islam.

2.1 Value of water

Water; away from being a critical need for living it occupied a prominent place in the Arab-Islamic culture.In Islam water also symbolizes the descent of revelation; in ablution through water, the Muslims are symbolically returning into his primordial state [7], ablution (Wudu) for Muslims are considered main duty to be performed accurately daily before each prayer. Five times Muslim must use water in the process, Wudu not only refers to a physical cleansing but also for spirit and self-purity. The subject of purification has been said in the Qur'an on two levels, first indicating a methodology must be followed in sequence to clean particular body parts before each prayer in a procedure called Wudu (ablutions), the second specifies is a deep meaning of the water rinsing the Muslim's soul from all sins. *"It is He who sends down water to you from the sky with which to purify you"*(Al-Anfal 8:11). Purity is a word of profound significance, it symbolizes personal hygiene, both physically and spiritually, Muslims believe that purity is a divine gift to reach psychological peace.Water as a God gift would have been withheld from people due to their continues sins, but he would not, hoping they will be thankful for that.*"Consider the water which you drink. Was it you that brought it down from the rain clouds or We? If We had willed, We could make it bitter, why then do you not give thanks."*(The Event 56:68-70)

2.2 Conservation of water

Islam is the religion of moderation in all things; it prohibited the extravagance in all forms.Therefore, the Muslims are forbidden to wastewater. The issue of rationalizing the use of water is a very important issue because wasteful waste leads to depletion and thus poses a threat to the future of existing water resources. Rationalization of water from an Islamic point of view requires a Muslim to consider several things; The task of man in succession and earth engineering, man, is used in the earth and not the owner of it and its resources. The earth is God's property.Therefore, each person responsible for preserving it and not to spoil or/and violate its resources. Water is a blessing by the grace of God; humans should appreciate it to prevent it from demise. Water resource is a right for all time, for not only a specific period or decay that is why humans shall protect it and secure it for the coming generations. Many criticisms could bedirected at Muslims regarding their daily use of water in the process of wudu, as mentioned previously it is prohibited to wastewater by anyway. In wudoo it is meant to be done with a limited amount of water.

2.3 Dispensary of water

Arid life, lack of rains and rare water networks, made water a source of charity. In some Islamic countries, some people were responsible for water delivery, because of the percentage of salt in water wells and distance from water resource. The one responsible for water distribution was called Al-Sakka Fig 1, this job was famous in some Islamic countries than others due to the environmental condition, population and water resource. According to the Egyptian historians, Al-Sakka is the person responsible for transporting water from reservoirs and the Nile to mosques, schools, houses, and public Sabil. He had many difficulties in providing water to those in need; he was always distinguished by honesty and morals. Al-Sakka used to have a license allowing him to with the expansion of Islamic territory, cities became more extensive and complex and it became necessary to build service buildings. One of the services were water dispensary among the public, and for that, a building was assigned to provide Population and passers-by with fresh cold water, it was called Sabil (The water Dispensary).

2.4 Definition

The word Sabil derived from the word sabala, which means; to let fall, drop or to let hand down. In Arabic language, Sabil means Way, road, path [8], Used in the *Quran* both literally and metaphorically over 150 times to correct belief and behavior [9]. The word Sabil has various meanings; it refers to the rain falling from the sky before it reaches the land, water

pouring into the pot and a place for water gathering. Some references the name to a water eye in heaven called SALSABIL mentioned in the Quran [10]. The terminology of Sabil refers to a public place for drinking or fountain dedicated to watering passers-by and those who need drinking, it probably derived from its mean-ing referring to a work done on behalf of god, so it is considered a Charity building [8]. As an architecture term, it refers to a small building devoted to water gathering and drinking, built separately or attached to a mosque or/and school Kuttab (a place for learning Quran). The word Sabil during the Islamic middle ages was not limited to the water dispensary, but it referred to the majority of charity service buildings eaither for water drinking or poor and orphans' education.

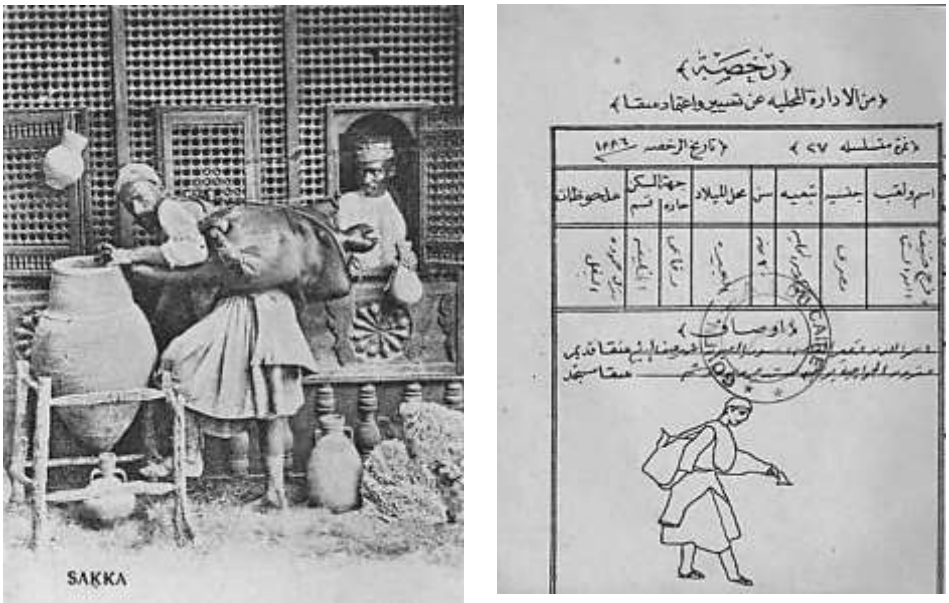


Figure 1: to the left a picture of El-Sakka filling a clay container, to the right a sample of the job-practicing license [20].

3 Sabil (The water Dispensary)

3.1 Sabil origins

The idea of providing people with water was not an Islamic creation, before Islam, the service existed for pilgrims, nobles of Quraysh competed to offer the incoming for haj with water as they considered that benefits their reputation. ZamZam is regarded as the first water dispensary for pilgrims and others Fig 2, since and before Islam rules Makah, ZamZam used to be the primary source of water during the Haj season. Water for Arabs is considered a valuable gift, due to their weather condition and land natural. In the rule of the Caliphs, especially Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, the interest in providing water was not limited to buying wells and making them charity but also establishing buildings specifically for drinking [11]. During the rule of The Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, a superb development has been conducted to the water resources specially ZamZam well. Several buildings made especially

for water charity in Syria, Yamen, Egypt and many other Islamic countries, Cairo included many water dispensary building; some were attached to mosque or school. The Wakf system has a significant contribution to the Sabil spread in the Muslims cities; the system is a Charity Endowments from some people to either public or specific people The Sabil ordinarily established in full residential areas. Moreover, some of them were reserved for women that are not capable of paying for their daily use of water [12].

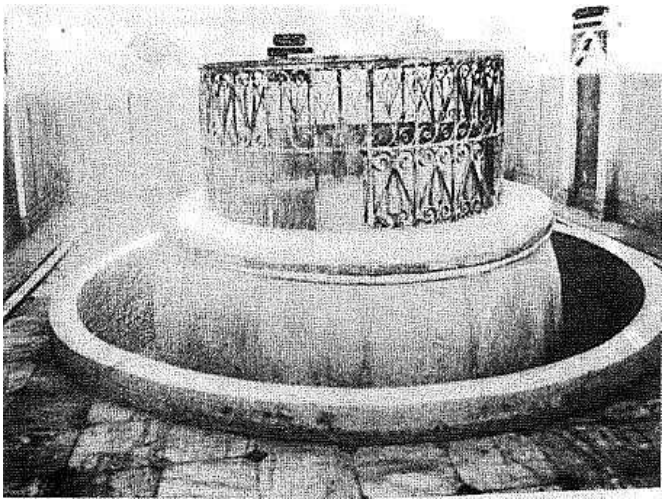


Figure 2: Old Picture of ZamZam Well, example of the first water dispensary for pilgrims.

4 SABIL ARCHITECTIURE

Sabil building never considered, as one of the commemorative or aesthetic elements in the Islamic architecture, the importance of this building stemmed from the Precious value of water in Islam. The Sabil is one of the charity, not only a public place to provide animals and humans with water but a holy building suitable for divine revelation since water was regarded as a divine and not a mundane gift [13]. Consequently, the Sabil architecture became more sophisticated because of not considering it only a source of water to the citizens and passers-by. The building of the Sabil was formed, as it is known; in the Mamluks period of rolling tell the nineteenth century [14]. The Sabil ordinarily constructed from two or three floors they may vary in the size according to the dedicated land and the estimated beneficiaries' number [15]. The first floor is under the ground and used as a water tank. The second used to be slightly higher than the street level to form the Sabil main room, this room used to have windows with bathtubs under the windows filled with fresh water. The third floor used to be an education place named Kutab; sometimes that level was dedicated to the person responsible for the Sabil water filling and maintenance Fig 3. Usually, the Sabil filling with water was the responsibility of the owner or donor of the building, as stipulated by the endowments.

4.1 The water tank

The water tank was in the basement of each Sabil (under the ground), It's size used to vary according to the building size. It issued to be filled with water to ensure year-round water availability for the needy and passers-by [15]. In a yearly process, the tank must be maintained before filling with water again. Some Sabil used to have more than one water tank, Sabil Sultan Qaitbay in Cairo has two water tanks. The shape of the water tank used to be either square or rectangular, and the ceiling used to have small Non-deep domes based on archways and columns Fig 3. Each tank has three openings; the first is for water supply and used to be accessible from the street, making it easy to provide the tanks with water. This opening used to be covered tightly to avoid dust from entering the water tank Fig 4. The second opening is a half circular, curved in one of the water tank walls and continuing tell it end up with an opening in the Sabil main room. It was used to provide the Sabil room with water from the water tank well. The last opening is for maintenance and cleaning, it was wide enough that someone can enter the water tank; it was linked to the Sabil main room, in one of the room corners, with Andalusi Stairs. The number of stairs varies according to the tank depth, usually no more than 17 steps [16].

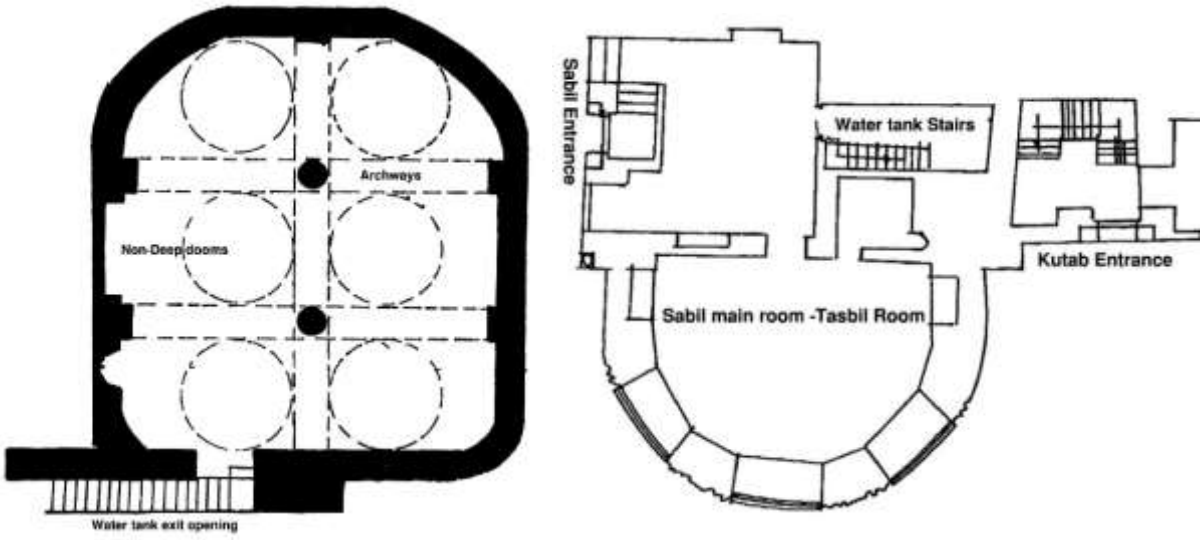


Figure 3: to the left Water tank of Sabil Sultan Mahmoud located in Habbaniyah- Cairo, the right plan is for the first floor, Sabil main room (Tasbil room) [17].

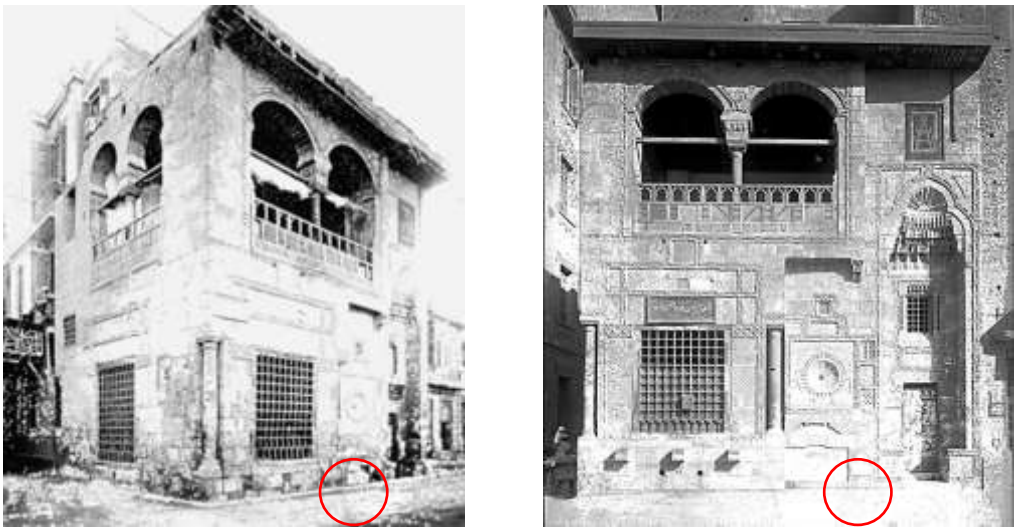


Figure 4: Front facade of Sabil El-Sit Salha- Sayda Zainb -Cairo, Showing the first water tank opening which used, to supply the tank with water [21].

4.2 The Sabil main room (Tasbil Room)

The main room was the visible part of the whole construction. Accordingly, this part used to reflect different Islamic architecture themes, which varies according to the country and period. The Sabil Main room and its extensions used to be the most functional part of the building for the users; it is the part of the building, which passers used to drink water. It was called Tasbil room or Mazmala during the Ottoman period. The Tasbil room used to be in the same level of the street or slightly higher to make it more functional and durable; the Sabil entrance was shared with the main building entrance but with a privet door. The floor of the room used to be covered with colored marble to ensure easy maintenance and help interior atmosphere adjustment, therefore, cooling the water. Due to the importance of this room, it was designed from elements to achieve the full function of the place:

4.2.1 Shazrawan

The Shazrawan is placed in the center of the Tasbil space, confronting the primary window; the size used to be approximately around 1.14M Width and 0.65M depth. Bordered with Octagonal or circular marble column from both sides Fig 5. In This recess lower part, a decorated Slanting marble board called; Salsabil constructed for water cooling proposes. The water is gathered in a basin underneath the board, this basin is connected to floor channels to other basins below each window, to accomplish water approachability for users. The upper part of the Shazrawan some time was decorated with wooden muqarnas and three pointed Arch. In the Turkish Sabil, the Shazrawan refers to the large basin located in the middle of mosques [17].

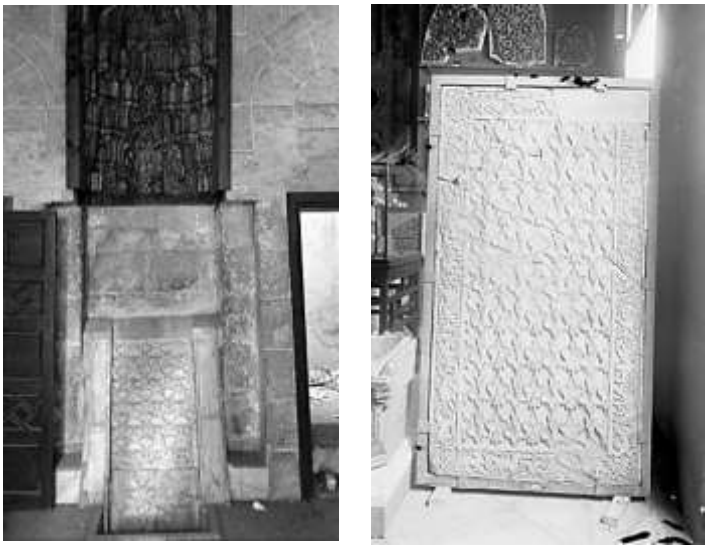


Figure 5: From the left, Shazrawan of Sabil& Kuttab Sulayman Bey Al – Kharbotli, the right picture showing Marble Salsabil board of Sabil Faraj Ben Barqouq [21].

4.2.2 Sabil main room windows

These openings are the most important element in the Sabil structure; it forms the linkage with the public. Through several windows, varies in number and size from Sabil to another, the passers can drink cold water. Most of the time these windows took the rectangular shape and protected with steel and copper beams Fig 6, these steel net used to be same as the exterior wall level, in few Sabil it was shifted to align the inner level of the exterior wall, and that space was dedicated for the drinking cups. Each window lower frame covered with marble with width 40cm to carry the drinking cups. In 1744 the shape of the opening changed to half-circle arch, in Abdul Rahman Katkhada Sabil its windows converted to half circular Arche [17]. This Sabil was the beginning of the transference from the standard shape of the openings, into a form influenced by the Turkish style.

4.2.3 Raised terrace

To grantee the safety of the users, a step up in front of each window was added to make it higher than the street level. Because of the change that took place on surrounding streets and the high street level, there are not many terraces left.

4.2.4 Water Basin

Each window of the main room; services a basin, the water is gathered in this basin and ready for use by the public. The shape of these basins varies from rectangular to circular and ellipse; they are made from marble parts assembling or curving a marble block to shape a cavity. The bottom of this basins is made from colored ornamented marble with a small fountain in the middle.

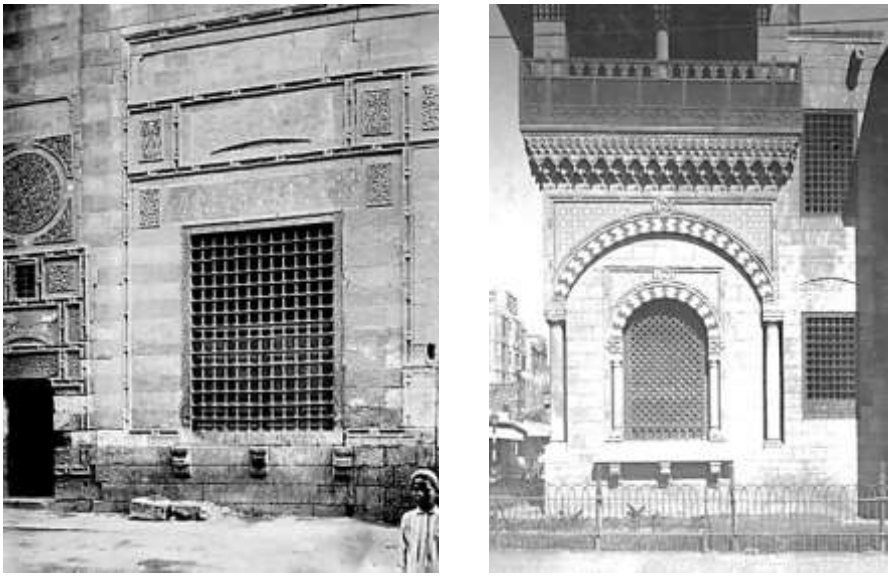


Figure 6: From the left, the Window of Sabil Qaitbay in Azhar (Egyptian locale rectangular design), to the right Sabil window in Youssef Agha Mosque Turkish influence [21].

4.3 Third floor (Kuttab)

One of the important Sabil components, it was an extension for the main Sabil room in both Mamluks and Ottoman Sabil. The purpose of this supplement was to educate Muslim orphans free of charge, as a sort of charity. The Kuttab room used to take a rectangular shape, with the main rib overlooking the main street. The main difference between the regular Sabil and the Turkish influenced one was the curved wall that forms the main façade which usually faces the main street. Kuttab walls used to have niches used as bookshelves and storage. The Kuttab usually overlooks the street with balcony formed of arches mounted on poles, as seen in Sabil El-Sit Salha Fig 4. The top of the Sabil used to have a sunshade made of wood to protect the users from the sun. In Sabil Abdul Rahman Katkhada we can see the duel sunshade which holds wooden arches and columns. The Sheikh or teacher used to have a linked room to the Kuttab varies in the size according to the Sabil area. The Kuttab was a simple, functional extension used for kids' education, the main reason of linking the Kuttab to the Sabil was to occupy the upper floor of the place moreover supplement the charity of the building [17].

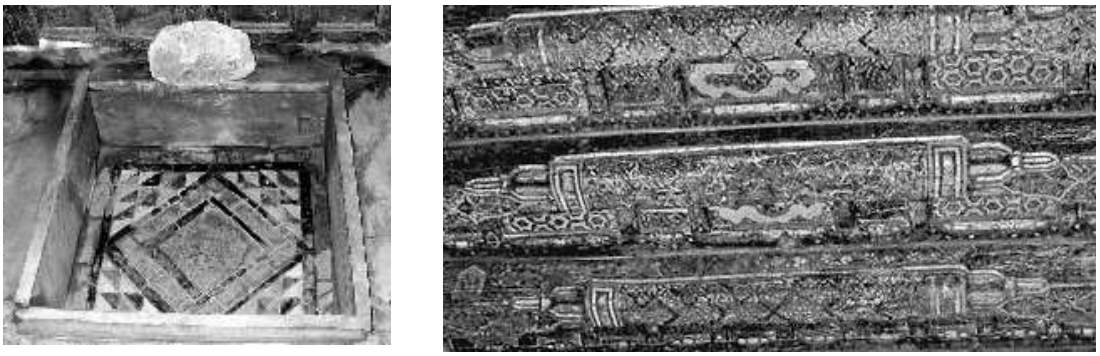
5 SABIL ORNEMNTS AND MOTIFES

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Allah, the Exalted, has said: 'I have prepared for my righteous slaves what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and the mind of no man has conceived. And in the Quran *"No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do"* (El Sajdah 32:17). The Quran and hadith, through its descriptions of Paradise Springs, fruits, trees and more than the mind and eye could imagine, inspired Muslim architect. All that encouraged the Muslim designer towards meditation

within the surrounding creation made by God, moreover, motivated him to embellish his designs and aim for perfection. Therefore, Islamic architecture came ornamented with Islamic motifs and calligraphy scripts. Sabil; one of the Islamic architectures that were not less fortunate than the others, ornaments, and motifs decoration were added especially in the ottoman Sabil with Turkish influences.

5.1 Geometric motifs

Broadly speaking, geometric ornaments and decoration shapes have wide use in most of the civilizations, due to its straight line and shape simplicity. In Islamic art, this type been enormously used and was developed to reflect the Islamic artist skills. it's known that geometric shapes consist lines and angles, The Muslim artist excelled in forming unconventional relationships to give infinite and overlapping forms, Star pattern was one of the eminent formations used in decorating many architectures [18]. Geometric motifs have evolved greatly in the Islamic arts to become more sophisticated; we can see that in Islamic furniture, doors, buildings, and much more. The liner intersection based Geometric motifs were used at the border in most of the Sabil ceiling, Sabil Khosro Pasha Fig 7, wood ceiling shows a mixture of geometric ornaments. More primitive shapes ornaments used in windows, doors and flooring, Marble flooring design of Sabil Khosro Pasha Fig 7. The Islamic paterae; circular motif used in the Sabil facade, curved on stone as seen in Sabil El-Sit Salha Northwest Facade Fig 4.



Khosro Pasha, to the left marble flooring ornaments, the right picture wooden ceiling Figure 7: Sabil design.

5.2 Vegetal ornaments

Vegetal motifs and ornaments widely used on different Islamic eras. The Muslim artist avoided nature simulation and depended on abstracted elements, using repetition, symmetry, and symbolism to create a balance and rhythm in his work. During the Ottoman period and affected by Chinese influences, more simulation to natural was applied in the plant ornamentations. In the begging of the eighteenth century, new motifs came from European

origins, after the Renaissance period a new Islamic theme inspired by Rococo and baroque began to shape and form some motifs. Sabil shows deferent plant ornamentations starting from simple Arabesque; in most of the wooden ceilings. Tell, some complicated and natural simulating Plant branches and flowers show up in Turkish influence Sabil Fig 9.

5.3 Arabic calligraphy

Avoiding animal and human shapes in the ornaments, built a focus on developing the plants and geometric motifs [15]. Although, the Muslim artist creativity in motif placement, most of the other civilization shared this ornamenting technique. Calligraphy was a unique way of decorating in the field of interior and architecture. Arabic calligraphy generated a different script with a unique style varies from a script to another, the two major scripts, angular and rounded, are classified based on the letter and line types. The flexibility, modulation, and unlimited adaptability to surfaces of this calligraphy made it the primary source for architectural decoration. Sabil was one of the Islamic archenteric elements that been decorated by calligraphy. The angular script is represented by Kufic scripts, which have a more geometric style with an evident rhythm and stress on horizontal lines [19]. There are varieties of rounded scripts, such as Thuluth, Naskh, and Diwani. Arabic calligraphy uses in Sabil had three purposes, the firs were to determine the name founder and date, usually located in the main facade. The second used to determine the function of the building, and most of the time Quran Verses was used for this purpose. It is worth mentioning that the verses were used according to its apparent meaning and not the Quran context meaning [17]. For Example, the Writing on Sabil Um-Abbas Fig 9, one of the used verse above the Sabil window mentions; "*And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by a downpour - so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]*" (Al-Baqarah: 265), Written in Thuluth Script. The third writing, is a prayer for the Sabil founder, reflect his generosity and desire to receive God's satisfaction. The positioning of this Calligraphy was critical; it was used to form a balance, rhythm, and harmony. Whenever the Arabic calligraphy is used we feel it is an integral part of the architectural composition.

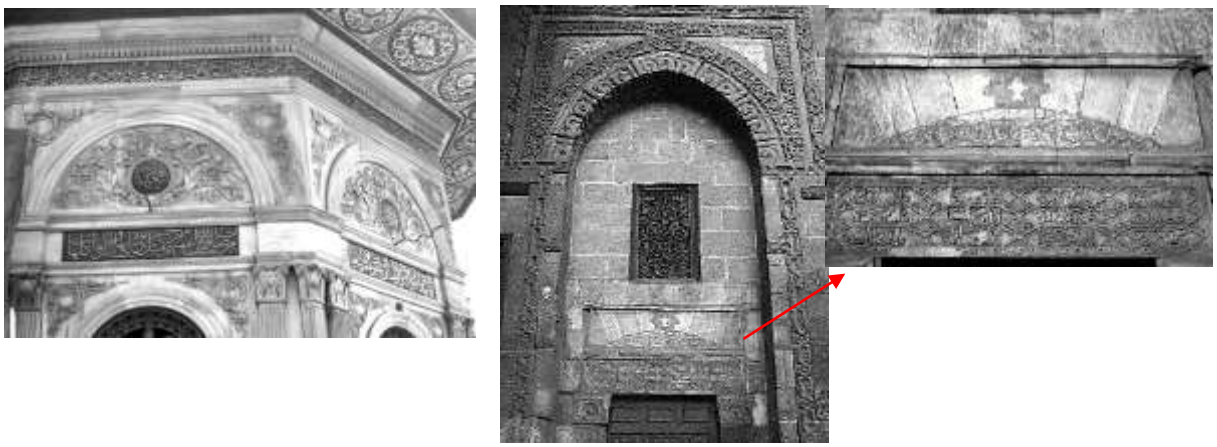


Figure 9: to the left Arabic calligraphy on top of Sabil UM-Abbas Window, the right picture for the writing on top of the main door of Sabil Kuttab Bashir Agha, both located in Cairo.

6 CONCLUSION

Islamic civilization encompassed all aspects of life, concerned with building the individual before architecture. Islamic architecture cannot be considered, in the first place, a symbolic architecture. Tawhid (oneness) and faith in one Creator, made the ruling thought in religion based on legislation and laws. At the early Islamic periods, architecture came simple and with no attention to motifs and ornamentation. Then with the expansion of the Islamic territory, more influences affected the Islamic designs. The local theme influenced the Islamic architecture in a region. However, it developed within the scope of Islam and the elimination of aspects that are contrary to Islamic law. It is possible to say that there are particular principles for the life of a Muslim individual directed by the Sharia for urban development. Islam architecture and art are inspiring, not only; the great shapes, forms, and design elements, but also the translation of the culture and Islamic rules into all life aspects including architecture and design. Many of the design elements stemmed from the ideology of the Islamic civilization. Sabil as one of the Islamic architecture was built to serve the community of Islam and to ensure the value of water and its importance, either on the humanitarian level or in terms of the desire to earn the reward from Allah. Conservation of water was grounded in Islamic principles and ethics, not only water but also all environment and natural resources been respect. We can point the paper results in the following:

- Water is a hidden value in Islam. It symbolizes purity and the availability of water reflects the satisfaction of God.
- Sabil Construction, design theme, ornamentation, and concept stemmed from the importance and the value of water charity and conservation.

- The design of Sabil reflected how the owners of the building took into consideration the value of charity on the religious level. Therefore, it showed a high interest in aesthetics and functional aspects.
- Depending on the space and size of land dedicated to the Sabil, the building Structure and function been accommodated, with a minimum requirement to grant the functionality of the space.
- The Sabil as an element of the Islamic architecture reflects the close connection between thought, whether religious or ideological and design output.

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