This paper discusses the concepts of God, man and the natural environment, as well as their implications for Islamic architecture. The paper is divided into seven sections: 1) Introduction: what is Islamic architecture?; 2) The idea of Tawhid (God’s Oneness); 3) Islam and the role of man on earth; 4) Islam on the environment; 5) The importance of built environment; 6) Peaceful and sustainable coexistence between man, the environment and architecture; 7) Conclusion. The nature of the paper: its content, methodology and conclusions, is conceptual, or philosophical, rather than empirical. The paper concludes that Islamic architecture is an architecture that through its multidimensionality embodies the message of Islam. It both facilitates the Muslims’ realization of the Islamic purpose and its divine principles on earth and promotes a lifestyle generated by such a philosophy and principles. Central to the understanding of the identity of Islamic architecture, as both a concept and sensory reality, is the understanding of the Islamic concepts of God, man and the environment. This is so because it is man who perceives, creates and uses architecture. It is man who produces or destroys architecture. It is man who enjoys or suffers from architecture. Furthermore, architecture and the natural environment are inseparable, both at the conceptual and practical planes. The environment holds enormous potential and diversified resources meant only for man, God’s vicegerent on earth. They are to be seen as the facilities which facilitate each and every aspect of man’s fleeting stay on earth. The environment is further to be seen by man as an ally or a partner, so to speak, in the execution of his earthly mission. After all, in order to create an architecture, man borrows diverse ingredients from nature, God’s physical realm, such as space, water, clay, timber, stone and other minerals, placing the newly created or built elements back into the existing natural contexts. In other words, the built environment in so many ways is the natural environment that has been borrowed, utilized, manipulated and processed. Man himself constitutes a part of the universal natural setting. It goes without saying that some of the most prominent features of Islamic architecture must always be as follows: it is heavily loaded with the Islamic spirituality; it is economic and safe; it is users friendly; it is environment friendly; and, it is sustainable.
Islamic Architecture, God, Islam, Man as the Vicegerent on Earth, the Environment

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