"In this seminar, the Award strives to look to the fountainhead of inspiration on which Muslims and non-Muslims draw to create the spaces and buildings we admire. What aspects of the social or religious backgrounds transpire into their creation? Is it their interpretation of their faith? Is it the ethic of their faith? Is it the rules of social conduct of their faith? And, indeed, the hard question has to be asked, is it their faith at all?

"How do they perceive problems of scale, intimacy, regionalism? How do they choose materials, textures, and colours? What use do they make of water, flowers, and scent? Do they relate one or some, all or none, of these considerations to their faith, or to their ethic, or to a secular tradition? Is the secularisation of the modern Western world affecting their professional approach, or, on the contrary, is the search for an Islamic identity encouraging them to learn much more about their history and tradition than what their forefathers knew or learnt? If there is a return to the essence of their background, is it in the form of a search for identity, or is it in the form of a new commitment to their faith?

"These are the questions of a “living faith” -- a living faith that manifests itself in a myriad of ways, from the lowliest, smallest corner stall in a market, to the inspired grandeur of stately congregational mosques and public buildings which define landmarks and articulate urban spaces, with the many, many in-between."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1990 Opening Address to the Expressions of Islam in Buildings Seminar (Jakarta, Indonesia)

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