



## Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

Volume 10, Issue 1, Spring 2020

pISSN: 2075-0943, eISSN: 2520-0313

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.101>

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>

Journal QR Code:



Article:

### Impact of Qur'ān upon Aesthetics and its Evolution: A Religio-Cultural Discourse

Author(s):

Muhammad Ashfaq  
Manzoor Ahmad Al Azhari

Published:

Spring 2020

Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.101.12>

QR Code:



Muhammad Ashfaq

To cite this  
article:

Ashfaq, Muhammad, and Manzoor Ahmad Al Azhari.  
“Impact of Qur'ān upon aesthetics and its evolution: A  
Religio-Cultural discourse.” *Journal of Islamic  
Thought and Civilization* 10, no. 1 (2020): 212–234.

[Crossref](#)

Copyright  
Information:

This article is open access and is distributed under the  
terms of Creative Commons Attribution – Share Alike  
4.0 International License

Publisher  
Information:

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School  
of Social Science and Humanities, University of  
Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

### Indexing Partners



For more  
[please click  
here](#)

## Impact of Qur'ān upon Aesthetics and its Evolution: A Religio-Cultural Discourse

**Muhammad Ashfaq\***

Department of Islamic Studies,  
HITEC University Taxila, Pakistan

**Manzoor Ahmad Al Azhari**

Department of Islamic Studies,  
HITEC University Taxila, Pakistan

### Abstract

This paper intends to know how Qur'ānic Scripture influenced prevailing values of art and aesthetics with an exclusive Islamic worldview and contribution. It is an important aspect of Islamic civilization which may be studied from the very beginning of Islamic history along with later developments examining critically various characteristics of Islamic aesthetics. Employing analytical method, we came to know Qur'ānic Scripture as a precursor of Islamic aesthetics and *raison d'être* for Islamic culture and civilization. It functions as super hand in the Islamic cultural ingredient changing ideas and thought totally or partially ameliorating prevailing social standards. This discourse makes it clear that the Islamic foundation of aesthetics is one of the contemporary matter of the Prophetic era. By dint of this study, one may become familiar with the concept that how art and aesthetics were welcomed, customized, innovated and transferred after their infiltration as per Islamic norms inculcating values. Islamic civilization warmly welcomed to any alien sorts of aesthetic reflection trimming its irrelevancy off in the light of *Tawhīd* showing harmony exercising within its own domain, identity and unique weltanschauung. Hence, Qur'ānic Scripture *vis-à-vis* Islamic aesthetics has self-explanatory evidences of its origin, distinctive historical promotion and its identity in different cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Qur'ānic Scripture, Islamic Aesthetics, Impact, Religio-Cultural Discourse (RCD), Ultimate Reality

### Introduction with Preliminary Discourse

The paper aims at studying the impacts of Qur'ānic Scripture and their contribution to Islamic civilization for promoting art and beauty. It has also an objective to examine the influence of Islamic aesthetics upon culture and chronological background from the very beginning of Islamic history when seeds of various fields of knowledge and practices were sown that the emerged later as the healthy and fruitful plants. This article desired to discern how art and aesthetics was received, improved and transferred after its distillation as per Islamic values, attitudes and creeds. We delimited our research domain to a number of

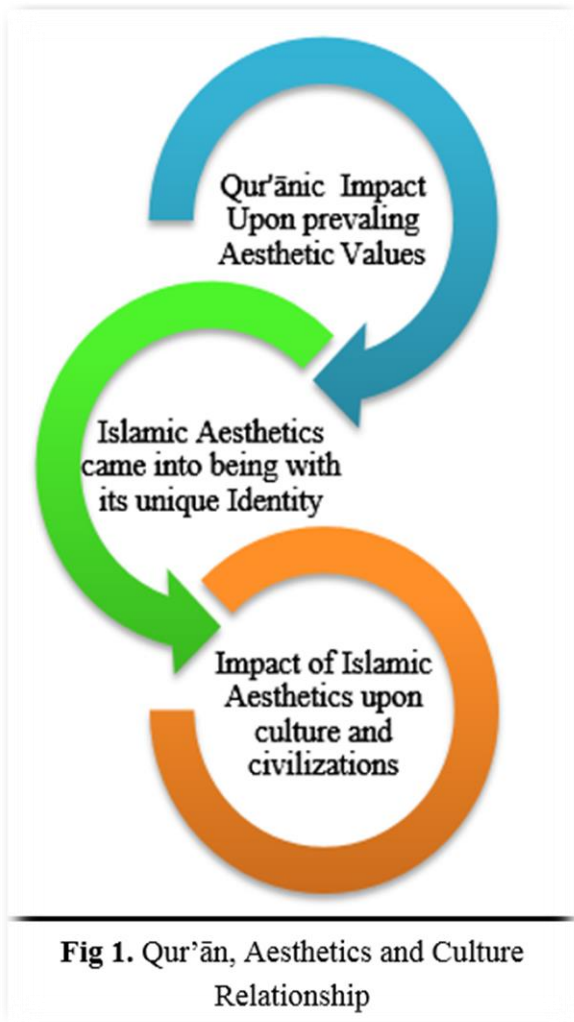
---

\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mr. Muhammad Ashfaq, PhD Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, HITEC University Taxila, Pakistan, at [m.ashfaq.hrp@gmail.com](mailto:m.ashfaq.hrp@gmail.com)

selected relevant discussions regarding beauty and aesthetics (*jamāliyyāt*) examining critically the emergence of Islamic aesthetics, its development, expansion and changes happening after the Holy Prophet's era. Various queries have been analyzed confronting Islamic aesthetics observing historical development in the field of art and beauty and impact of Qur'ānic Scripture upon it. For this, we have studied about aesthetics, its religious aspects, and socio-cultural impressions. What is the relation of Qur'ān to the already prevailing values and corrective measure in relation to Islamic thought due to which foundation of Islamic aesthetics came into being? We have also observed different responses in front of Islamic aesthetics and their appraisal as well within the epistemological domain of subject study within its own scope of freedom and identity?

First of all the basic term *aesthetics* needs be made clear. Various dictionaries and lexica offer different dimensions of the term Aesthetics. As Greek term *aesthesis*

means feeling, sensation or perception and in some contexts simply experience or intellectual and moral perception. The word 'aesthetics' means having an ability to perceive, grasp and comprehend. It is the particular approach to what is pleasing the senses especially the sight. In Arabic dictionaries, the word '*jamāl*' has been taken from the consonantal root '*j-m-l*' a verbal noun of *al-jamīl* and defined as '*beauty in actions and constitution*' while with different diacritical marks of root '*j-m-l*', Ibn-Manzūr discussed beauty of natures and animal, attractiveness of human expression that how we communicate beautifully and beauty of Lord what we say in Islamic philosophy the



**Fig 1. Qur'ān, Aesthetics and Culture Relationship**

Ultimate Beauty and beauty (and aesthetics) of other things quoting Qur'ānic verses, Prophetic Saying and 'Arab's poetry.<sup>1</sup>

It may be applied to the form (*ṣūwar*) or meaning (*ma'ānī*) of things. The Holy Qur'ān mentions both '*ḥusn*' and '*jamāl*' interchangeably in an ethical as well as aesthetic sense. The term '*ḥusn*' is also associated with the decent acts and moral and ethical upright while '*jamāl*' is connected to beauty of shapes and form. Similarly, we may examine number of references from Islamic Scripture having word *zīnah*, *ḥusn*, '*jamāl*' and *jamīl*, etc., in relation to aesthetics expression.

Dr Rūhī Bālbakī translated aesthetics ('*Ilm al-jamāl*) as beauty, grace, splendour, fineness, prettiness or attractiveness of the shapes.<sup>2</sup> According to Encyclopedia Britannica it is also spelled as *esthetics* called as the study of beauty whereas to a lesser extent, it's opposite is called as ugly. The title 'aesthetics' first appeared in the book '*Reflection in Poetry*' by Alexander Baumgartner in 1735. It is closely related to the philosophy of art, the nature of art, which is associated with the concepts in terms of which individual works of art are interpreted and evaluated.<sup>3</sup>

Technically speaking, we may add that "*aesthetics is a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art and beauty*". According to dictionary of aesthetics Baumgartner applying the term '*aesthetics*' to the sensible realm. He may be credited as one of the originator of term 'aesthetics' as a discipline and applied this technique to poetry and its language. He proposed that it would also apply to painting and picture, sculpture and statue, and music or tune.<sup>4</sup> Introducing aesthetics as a distinct discourse of philosophy, he argued to provide a different type of knowledge from the distinct and abstract ideas studied by 'logic.'<sup>5</sup> According to '*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*' aesthetics is defined as: "Philosophical investigation into the nature of beauty and the perception of beauty, especially in the arts, the theory of art or of artistic taste."<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the term calligraphy having Greek origin where word *kalligraphia*, also means writing in beautiful manner and good looking or the visual explanation of printed scripts known in Arabic as *khatt* or *script*. However, for further studies one may consult

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad bin Mukarram bin 'Alī bin Aḥmad bin Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir, 1414 AH), 11:126-128.

<sup>2</sup>Dr Rūhī Bālbakī, *Al-Mawārid* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malayīn Lebanon, 2006), 492.

<sup>3</sup>Hemingway Banton, *Encyclopedia Britannica* (U.S.A: Inc Publication, 1973/74), 1:149.

<sup>4</sup>Dabney Townsend, *Historical Dictionary of Aesthetics* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 18-19.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995/1999), 11-12.

<sup>6</sup>Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

the work of Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad Nāṣir, as second chapter of his book '*Aesthetics*' (*jamālīyāt*) contains a lot of definitions of aesthetics with reference to various philosophers.<sup>7</sup>

In a nutshell, we may add in the light of literal and technical study that harmony, symmetry, taste and sensation, beauty and ugly, sublimity, rhythm, calligraphy and painting, fine-looking building and construction, various design of architect, subjective or objective study of what is being observed and *arabesques*,<sup>8</sup> are some important terms and discussions of the aesthetics. Islamic aesthetics incorporates epistemologically physical and metaphysical range and compass to define an object and its relative beauty. This preliminary discourse may help us to examine how Islamic concept of aesthetics incorporates these aspects and what is the influence of the Holy Qur'ān upon aesthetic values converting them as Islamic one along with solely new participation and cultural impact.

## 2. Literature Review

A number of books and research papers reveal Islamic contribution to art and aesthetics and historical evolution. The work already done related to the subject discourse can be divided into different categories from calligraphy to that of Islamic thought and value regarding aesthetics. Considering the impact of Qur'ānic Scripture and the importance of sensation plus significance of perception and aesthetics, Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad Nāṣir penned a book in Urdu language entitled as, *Jamālīyāt: Qur'ān kī Rawshanī Mēn*. He added multiple definitions and elaborations of aesthetics with reference to philosophical discourse and added Qur'ānic reference in this regard. His Qur'ānic commentary *Tafsīr Husn-i Qur'ān* also contains aesthetic remarks succinctly.

Spahic Omer compiled *Mosque Decoration between Acceptance and Rejection*, a notable presentation saturated with beautiful pictures of religious buildings. He recorded the impact of Islamic Scripture adding Islam is a natural and rational religion, it opposes neither artistic creativity nor the enjoyment of beauty. It sees absolute beauty only in Allah and in His revealed will or words.<sup>9</sup>

Literature concerning lettering and calligraphy in which Qur'ānic chapters, verses and Arabic letters influence projecting a sense of aesthetic having origin from Islamic Scripture is remarkable contribution of scholars. For instance, M. Ziauddin added *A Monograph on Muslim Calligraphy Calcutta*, and discussed the theme with figure and letter referring to

<sup>7</sup>Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad Nāṣir, *Jamālīyāt: Qur'ān kī Rawshanī Mēn* (Karachi: Infāq Foundation, 2002), 22.

<sup>8</sup>An ornamental design consisting of intertwined flowing lines, originally found in ancient Islamic art. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/arabesque> retrieved on dated 19-12-2019. Or defined by Cambridge dictionary as a type of design based on flowers, leaves, and branches twisted together, found especially in Islamic art.

<sup>9</sup>Spahic Omer, "Mosque Decoration between Acceptance and Rejection," *Islamic Studies* 54, no.1-2 (2015): 31.

the Holy Qur'ān. Yasin Hamid Safadi also compiled “*Islamic Calligraphy*” and elaborated different styles of lettering paying special attention to write the names of Qur'ānic Sūrah etc. Furthermore, Titus Burckhardt bring together the data to write ‘*Moorish Culture in Spain*’, projecting mosque interior design and its relation to the art and aesthetics. In another book of title ‘*Art of Islam: Language and Meaning.*’ Titus Burckhardt has discussed an ornamental designs called as ‘*Arabesque*’ which is an artistic decoration of Islamic aesthetics, use of mathematics for prayer time and to find the direction of *Ka'bah*. This review claims the influence of Islamic Scripture upon architectural design including human thought.

Scholars have discussed the philosophy and pivotal concept working behind Islamic aesthetic and beautiful outlines designed at building structure. Fatemeh Nasrollahi also depicted the concept of presence of Lord in the patterns of Islamic aesthetics. He compiled a paper as, “Transcendent Soul of the Muslim Architect and Spiritual Impact of the Islamic Architecture: Islamic Architecture and Mundus Imaginal.” Recently Ḥanash’s contribution indicated that Islamic aesthetics within its own indigenous tradition explains beauty in broad sense having notable impression upon Islamic cognizance and non-Islamic awareness concerning aesthetics. He added that influence of Islamic theory of aesthetics is being highlighted due to the recent research of scholars and critics.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, various projects have been launched regarding Islamic art and aesthetics by Khaled Azzam and published online his work entitled as ‘*The Universal Principles of Islamic Art*’ in this regard.<sup>11</sup> He made comment on Islamic design and patterns with the concept of God’s creation and metaphysical dimension of aesthetics. However, reviewing literature one may find dozens of research papers and books having same and similar views. We have examined the existing research in order to find the impact of the Holy Qur'ān upon aesthetics and later development in this regard. Hence, this paper has different avenues regarding the subject matter considering religio-aesthetics discourse and its impacts upon culture revisiting the origin of Islamic aesthetics.

### 3. Impacts of Qur'ānic Scripture upon Aesthetic Values

When values and standards of ancient time came into contact with Islamic society, in return Islam welcomed some canons and thought, the other was treated as to make them better where rectification was required and the aesthetic values that were not in accordance with the concept *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of God) were precluded. For example, regarding prevailing standards of art and aesthetics we can behave and respond in the light of guidance from Prophetic treatment in relation to Judaica (*Isrā'īlīyāt*). As the interaction of aesthetic values is a measure of overlapping socio-cultural principles with aesthetic norms. It does matter how society is being developed and what values are about to join the society.

<sup>10</sup>Id'hām Muḥammed Ḥanash, *The Theory of Islamic Art: Aesthetic Concepts and Epistemic Structure*. Trans Nancy Roberts (London, Islamic Institute of Islamic Thought 2017), 29, 78-80

<sup>11</sup>Azzam, Khaled. *The Universal Principles of Islamic Art*. Website contents can be accessed at URL, <http://www.khaledazzam.net/architecture-tradition/universal-principles-of-islamic-art.php>



However, commenting about the impact of the Holy Qur'ān upon aesthetics we may visit a number of verses related to the splendor and beauty.

The Holy Qur'ān communicates various roots in this regard. For example, corpus dictionary displays data that tri-literal root *jīm mīm lām* (ج م ل) mentioned eleven times with different five derived forms.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the root *zāy yā nūn* (ز ي ن) is stated forty six times three derived forms, like *zayyana* (26 times), *zīnat* (19 times) and *izzayyanat* occurred once. Likewise, another tri-literal root mentioning aesthetic reflection, *hā sīn nūn* (ح س ن) elucidated in the Holy Qur'ān about 194 times consisting 12 derivatives. Similarly, treasure of Prophetic Sayings has also a lot of aesthetic notions and guidance for humanity. Succinctly we quote here, for example supplication before dressing when looking oneself in the mirror. We may contemplate Prophetic words as:

"اللَّهُمَّ كَمَا خَسَّنْتَ خَلْقِي، فَخَسِّرْ خُلُقِي"

“O Allah You have made my creation perfect, so make my moral characteristics also be the best.”<sup>13</sup>

We may visit one more reference from Ḥadīth in which method of supplication has been taught as:

"الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَسَانِي مَا أُورِي بِهِ عَوْرَتِي وَأَجَمَّلَ بِهِ فِي حَيَاتِي"

“Praise be to Allah Who has clothed me in something with which I conceal my nakedness and adorn myself in my life”<sup>14</sup>

All these references elaborate multiple aspects of aesthetics and beauty even in daily routine work and manners. How we have to think making sense of our working at higher level of intellectual exercise. This is the input that compel one towards the gratitude of religion Islam. On the other hand, these verses and Ḥadīth encountered *Ṣalbī* and *Ījābī* aspects of human affairs taking corrective measures where required pointing to the beauty etc.

We can study in detail one verse out of many Qur'ānic references as:

"وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرْجَعُونَ وَحِينَ تُسْرَخُونَ"

<sup>12</sup> <http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=jml> Accessed on 08-April-2020.

<sup>13</sup> Abū 'l-Qāsim Sulaymān Sulaymān bin Aḥmad Al-Ṭabrānī, *Al-Du'ā' lil-Ṭabrānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutab al-Ilmīyyah, 1413), 1:415.

This Ḥadīth is graded as Ḥasan according to the research of Ibn- Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī for detail we may consult as: Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī, *Bulūgh al-Marām min Adillat al-Aḥkām* (Saudia Arabia: Dār al-Qabs, 2014), 558. We may visit also “*Bulūgh al-Marām*”, Book 16, Hadith 1537 online as: <https://sunnah.com/urn/2118550>

<sup>14</sup> Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Yazīd bin 'Abdullāh al-Rab'ī al- Qazvīnī, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Egypt: Dār al-Ihyā al-Kutab al-'Arabīah, 2010), 1178.

“And ye have a sense of pride and beauty in them as ye drive them home in the evening, and as ye lead them forth to pasture in the morning.”<sup>15</sup>

When we visit different exegetical approaches regarding this verse we can find various dimensions. For example, scholars interpret the verse in relation to consecutive previous and next verse adding the beneficial and economic aspects along with beauty. Some exegetes commented aesthetic glimpse of dawn and dusk what is pleasing to the sight. Shaykh Sha'rāwī added that given blessings are not just to utilize them but it is incumbent to observe with the aesthetic sense what beauty, Allah Almighty bestowed upon us.<sup>16</sup> Other exegetes mentioned as to visit beauty in the physical appearance of the animal observing their bone, rib and body structure.

We think that Islamic Scripture instils and develops aesthetic value for one's own sake to make him capable in order play and participate his role positively. As people of Arabs were very fond of the animals like camels, horse, goats, etc., and the Holy Qur'ān addressed their aesthetics sense exactly close to their nature and behaviour. Let us say that this Qur'ānic indication of beauty was important input towards 'biological perspective of aesthetics' centuries ago.

In another verse, we think that the Holy Qur'ān indicates about Ultimate Beauty in the verse (55:29) of Sūrah Al-Raḥmān. Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad coined a term 'dynamic aesthetics' in the light of this verse.<sup>17</sup> In which Allah Almighty States as:

بِسْأَلِهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ<sup>18</sup>

“Of Him seeks (its need) every creature in the heavens and on earth: every day in (new) Splendour doth He (shine)!”

'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī rendered the verse and commented in note 5192 adding that “All is still the directing hand in all affairs... His working shows new splendor every day, every hour, every moment.”<sup>19</sup> In his Urdu commentary, '*Tafsīr Husn-i Qur'ān*,' Dr Naṣīr said that this verse that the Glory of Allah Almighty is matchless and a manifestation of His Beauty and His Majesty. In this theophany, the secret of His '*Aesthetic Creative Activity*' is implicit and concealed.<sup>20</sup> Ibn Āshūr also has discussed the Ultimate Beauty in relation to previous verses of Sūrah commenting about Lord of Majesty and Generosity (*Jalāl and Ikrām*) adding aesthetics and benevolence to the Divine Attribute of Honour, bounty and Generosity (*Ikrām*). In the commentary of this verse (55:29), he quoted number of

<sup>15</sup>Al-Qur'ān: an Naḥl 16:6.

<sup>16</sup>Muḥammad Matwalī Al-Sha'rāwī, *Tafsīr al-Sha'rāwī* (Egypt: Islamic Research Academy al-Azhar, 1991), 4746.

<sup>17</sup>Naṣīr, *Jamāliyyāt: Qur'ān kī Rawshanī Mēñ*, 85.

<sup>18</sup>Al-Qur'ān: Ar Raḥmān 55:29.

<sup>19</sup>'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī, *The Holy Qur'ān: Arabic Text English Translation and Commentary* (Lahore: Ashraf Printing Press, 2006), 1400.

<sup>20</sup>Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad Naṣīr, *Tafsīr Husn-i Qur'ān* (Lahore: Ferozsons Limited, 1998), 2:704.



interpretations along with the scholastic and theological discourse and added in relation to attributes of beautiful Lord's with beautiful and perfect manifestation.

وَمَعْنَى فِي عَلَى هَذَا التَّفْسِيرِ تَقْوِيَةٌ تُبَيِّنُ الشُّؤُونَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى وَهِيَ شُؤُونَ تَصَرُّفِهِ وَمَظَاهِرُ قُدْرَتِهِ.<sup>21</sup>

According to this *Tafsīr* the meaning of word “*fi*” is strengthening of the evidence that all affairs belong to Allah, and these affairs are of His action and manifestations of His Might.

However, Sūrah al-Raḥmān as a whole is an expression of values and principles for aesthetics. The last part of Sūrah highlights the gardens and their different beautiful reflections. In this regard, Saeid Khaghani quoted a borrowed expression from Z. Bauman stated in ‘*Liquid Modernity*’ as:

“*at the very centre of Islamic aesthetics, we find the garden a liquid image ... which moves from the theme of paradise as a garden.*”<sup>22</sup>

Another example of the aesthetics of the Holy Qur'ān is demonstrated by the conversion of second Caliph of Islam, great companion of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and mercy be upon him), ‘Umar (R.A), as handed down by the famous Islamic historians, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Kathīr. Bohudiba and M. Ma’rtif unanimously confessed that there are aesthetic values which vary according to the point of view of the person concerned.<sup>23</sup> Kermani focused the impact in the address and said that we are interested in the receiver, and specifically in the extent to which the Holy Qur'ān is actualized as an *aesthetic object* in the receiver’s mind.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, we may visualize how second Caliph of Islam was impressed and invited by Qur'ānic Scripture toward Ultimate Reality.

The impact of aesthetics may be noted from the sketches of Islamic building; we may grasp the situation visiting Hadīth narrated by ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar (R.A) as:

”مَعْنَى غَيْرِهِ عُمَانٌ، فَرَادَ فِيهِ زِيَادَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ، وَبَنَى جِدَارَهُ بِالْحِجَارَةِ الْمَنْفُوشَةِ وَالْقَصَبَةِ، وَجَعَلَ عُمْدَهُ مِنْ حِجَارَةٍ مَنْفُوشَةٍ، وَسَقَمَهُ بِالسَّاجِ.”<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Muhammad Muhsin translated this Hadīth as:

<sup>21</sup>Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanvīr* (Tunis: Dār al-Tunisia, 1984), 27: 254, 256, 255.

<sup>22</sup>Saeid Khaghani, *Islamic Architecture in Iran* (New York: I.B Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2017), 81.

<sup>23</sup>Abdel Wahab Bohudiba, and M. Ma’rtif al-Dawalibi, *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture: The Individual and Society in Islam* (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 24.

<sup>24</sup>Kermani, Navid, *God is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran*, trans. Tony Crawford. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 69.

<sup>25</sup>This Hadīth may also be visited slightly different in the words as stated in the following references.

(i)Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān bin ‘Ash‘ath bin ‘Ishāq Al-Sijistānī, *Ṣunan Abī Dawūd* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr 2009), 1: 338, Hadīth: 451; (ii)Muḥammad bin Ibn-Ḥibbān bin ‘Aḥmad Abū Ḥātim al-Bustī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn-Ḥibbān* (Beirut: Mawassisah al-Risāla 1993), 4:78 Hadīth: 1601

*“Uthman (R.A) changed it by expanding it to a great extent and built its walls with engraved stones and lime and made its pillars of engraved stones and its roof of teak wood.”<sup>26</sup>*

Furthermore, different scholars around the globe admitted Islamic aesthetics, its relation with revelation as well as everlasting imprints. Richard Ettinghausen (1906–1979) a German-American historian of Islamic art identified that, “if the garden was such a ubiquitous art form in the Muslim world, being both socially and geographically extensive, there must have been specific reasons for this propensity... First comes the idea of paradise as a reward for the faithful Muslim, a garden, descriptions of which have played an important part in the Muslim cosmography and religious belief.”<sup>27</sup> In the discourse regarding influential effect of the Holy Qur'ān as compared to what aesthetics of utterance they have even in the shape of poetry upon which they used to rely upon, where Karen Armstrong admitted that:

*“Without this experience of the Qur'ān, it is extremely unlikely that Islam would have taken root.”<sup>28</sup>*

He acknowledged that Muḥammad (Peace and mercy be upon him) had produced completely new literary figures although some people were not agreeing to but that delighted and thrilled many others. We may think that these references are an evidence of the Qur'ānic foundations for aesthetics like other various emerging out fields of knowledge during that time.

This is the sketch of Islamic aesthetics from very beginning and later on its influence around the globe has reputation similarly. A research team commenting on the recent situation as, “Some of the mosque designers or architects just give the priority on the aesthetics or the form and some of the mosques merely focused to provide as much space as possible to cater for more worshippers.”<sup>29</sup> About this matchless input Roger Du Pasquier remarked in his book ‘*Unveiling Islam*’ regarding Islamic Art and beauty that it radiates a ‘*quality of life*’ in a way that modern societies (and culture) may not be able to produce the equal (to what Islamic aesthetic values blessed with).<sup>30</sup>

As a result, we may think that this impact is not limited to the Muslim world only. It has been equally welcomed by other cultures and religions as well as adopting styles what

<sup>26</sup>Abū Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ismā‘īl bin Ibrāhīm bin Mughaira al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh Bukhārī*, trans Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Saudia Arabia: Maktaba Dār al-Salām, 1997), 9:285.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Ettinghausen, *Introduction, the Islamic Garden*, ed., by E. B. MacDougall and R. Ettinghausen (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1976), 6.

<sup>28</sup>Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: Random House Publishing Group, 1993), 78.

<sup>29</sup>Ahmad Ridzwan Othman, et al., “The Importance of Acoustic Design in the Mosques towards the Worshipers,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 234 (2016): 45-54.

<sup>30</sup>Roger Du Pasquier, *Unveiling Islam*, trans., from French to English by T. J Winter (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001), 119.

have been generated by Islamic aesthetic from Qur'ānic Scripture as forerunner. Measuring historically a research team exposed in *'The Different aspects of the Islamic Culture'* that important feature of Islamic civilization and culture is to provide fertile ground for the nourishment of scientific knowledge and its dynamic growth, artistic and aesthetic enhancement and intellectual exchange. In the field of art and architecture that the Mogul emperors left their most exquisite legacy.<sup>31</sup> Syed Naṣr remarked concerning Islamic art and aesthetics as:

*"This art, issuing from the inner reality (al-ḥaqīqa) of the Qur'ān, is an integral aspect of the Islamic revelation and plays a basic role not only in beautification of everyday life, but also in the remembrance of God."*<sup>32</sup>

As a result, we may think that Islamic art and aesthetics is not just apparent expression and beautiful outlook. It is something more concerning with the rectification of thought from worldly life to that of spiritual realm pointing towards Oneness of Allah Almighty. We may put that everyone has the quality of inner beauty, less or more, it may be polished and enhanced which can build the human mind for creative thinking and wisdom for the betterment of human being. Consider Islamic aesthetics and culture as ring of the Holy Prophet (Peace and mercy be upon him) and religious expression on it, as well as, the calligraphy of the Holy saying of Prophet (Peace and mercy be upon him) and Qur'ānic verses show a close relation to Islamic aesthetics. Islamic development of gardens, its organization seems like the sketch drawn from Qur'ānic paradise.

#### 4. Islamic Aesthetics Confronting Different Responses

In the discourse of *'Islamic Aesthetics'*, we may judge the posed questions that Islamic aesthetics is something misnomer without any link with Qur'ān and there is no contribution of Islamic scholars later on in this regard.<sup>33</sup> Injunctions concerning the photo and picture have also been taken as a reason that Islam has nothing to do with art and aesthetics. Dabney Townsend claimed that,

*"There is no particularly Islamic aesthetics based on the Qur'ān... Second, Islam is a religion, but the aesthetics of predominantly Islamic countries is not always or even predominantly religious."*<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, how a religion may permit aesthetics which prohibits even to take photo and picture referring as not allowed by *Ḥadīth*.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is required to investigate the

<sup>31</sup>Abdul Rahīm Alī, et al., *The Different Aspects of the Islamic Culture* (Beirut: UNESCO, 2016), 6: 258-259.

<sup>32</sup>Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe, *A Companion to World Philosophies* (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 458.

<sup>33</sup>Townsend, *Historical Dictionary of Aesthetics*, 174-175.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 49, 174.

<sup>35</sup>With the concept that how can a religion hold the value of aesthetics by whom to take a photo and pictures are not allowed and banned?.

remarks against Islamic aesthetics taking into account the all-inclusive concept and epistemology. If not then, *clichés-ridden* discourse may be either due to lack of information and because of biased attitude or otherwise. As well as the question of photo is concerned, in fact, the rationale behind this ban is to prevent even the slightest risk of magic and idolatry while exceptions were also there, for example, children's toys were allowed. Judging these objections Murad Hofmann, further remarked that there seems to be a connection between the Arab's aesthetics principle of repetition triggering a state of ecstasy, on the one hand, and the attempt to portray God's infinity at other, and both aspects are presented in arabesques and other unending ornamentation.<sup>36</sup>

So, Islamic aesthetics is an expression of peace and harmony because it has integral parts from the segments of various types of culture along with its own sole contribution. While, in the discourse of Islamic aesthetics, it is necessary to understand the whole concept as secular aspects of the life are also well saturated by teachings of Islam.

On the other hand, it is crystal clear that the role of Islamic scholars is remarkable concerning beauty and aesthetic. Critics have to examine that how Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā contributes regarding metaphysical aesthetics. What is the understanding of Al-Ghazālī in relation to sensory aesthetics, harmonious portions and artistic sensibility? Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Bājja and Ibn 'Arabī all these Islamic philosophers presented the world of aesthetics exclusively in relation to God's beauty and attributes. Islamic Philosophers including Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Khuldūn also returned to the notion of taste.<sup>37</sup>

Asad Mahmood argued for the necessity of Islamic art and culture and its preservation, therefore, in his concluding remarks of *'Islam at the Cross Road'* he indicated as: "The remnants of its cultural existence are being levelled to the ground under the pressure of Western ideas and customs. A note of resignation is perceivable; and resignation, in the life of nations and cultures, means death."<sup>38</sup>

Islamic society in the very beginning experienced some sort of arts but the development and later contributions are subject to the basic theme of beauty. Syed Ḥussain Naṣr connects these concepts of Islamic art and beauty to the *Ḥadīth*, "Allah is beauty and He loves the beauty". He quoted examples of grand Cordova Mosque in Spain (regarding this mosque how Iqbal expressed beauty and aesthetical sketch one may visit)<sup>39</sup> and also

<sup>36</sup>Murad Hofmann, *Islam the Alternative* (Pakistan: Suhail Academy Lahore, 2000), 101.

<sup>37</sup>Jose Miguel Puerta-Vilchez, *Aesthetics in Arabic Thought: from pre-Islamic Arabia through al-Andalus* (Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill Leiden, 2017), 755.

<sup>38</sup>Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the Crossroads* (Gibraltar: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), 98.

<sup>39</sup>Honourable Dr Muḥammad Iqbal picturized in *'Bāl-i Jibrīl'* the mutual links among Allah Almighty, His devotee, Cordova Mosque and its structure, a slogan of *Tawḥīd* to that of Muslim heart and feeling aesthetically as:

عشق سراپا دوام، جس میں نہیں رفت و بود  
معجزہ فن کی ہے خون جگر سے  
وہ بھی جلیل و جمیل، تو بھی جلیل و جمیل

“اے حرمِ قرطیب! عشق سے تیرا وجود  
رنگ ہو یا خشت و سنگ، چنگ ہو یا حرف و صوت  
تیرا جلال و جمال، مردِ خدا کی دلیل نمود

Istanbul, Isfahan and Samarqand represent the spirit of Islamic revelation and reflect the message of Divine Unity.<sup>40</sup>

The concept of aesthetics was invigorated by Islam inviting its followers to contemplate on the universal beauty. For example, it furnished the ethical and educational addition to the poetry for better social developments (in the very beginning).<sup>41</sup> Islamic aesthetics has also the inner dimensions along with the outer beautiful expression, for example the satisfaction of one's instinctive needs is supplemented by an aesthetic urge, which is one of the distinctive qualities of man. Shāh Walī Ullah named it as, 'zarāfah',<sup>42</sup> when he discussed man's internal dimensions and their mutual link with the aesthetics.

As Ibn al-'Arabī's philosophy of aesthetics, perfect love and perfect beauty both are closely interwoven.<sup>43</sup> He divided the beauty into three types like physical beauty, spiritual beauty and divine beauty. He preferred divine beauty over other types, which are also because of divine beauty. Discussing in the light of 'I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence I created the world so that I would be known'<sup>44</sup> and 'Indeed Allah is the beautiful and loves beauty'.<sup>45</sup> He expressed that these types of love as theophany's love of Ultimate Reality that is Allah Almighty.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, it is also affirmed by the Frithjof Schuon that virtue detached from God turn to pride, as beauty separated from God becomes idol, beauty either physical or ethical both ontologically belongs to the Lord in Islamic philosophy, both are openings to the Ultimate Reality in the darkness of human weakness.<sup>47</sup>

Isma'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī correlates the final *raison d'être* and creative base of Islamic civilization to the Holy Scripture of Islam. He named it as 'Qur'ānic Culture' as there is no culture without revelation in Islam. While art and aesthetics are Qur'ānic one and it is strange for non-Muslim who considered Islam as an iconoclastic and conservative that

كعبہ ارباب فن! سطوتِ دینِ مبین  
بے تم گزروں اگر حُسن میں تیری نظیر  
تجھ سے حرم مرتبت اندلسیوں کی زمیں  
قلب مسلمان میں ہے، اور نہیں بے کہیں

Link may be visited for more verses <http://www.iqbalcyberlibrary.net/txt/1858.txt> or <http://concordance.allamaiqbal.com> data accessed on dated 18-Feb-2020.

<sup>40</sup>Syed Hussain Naşr, *A Young Muslim Guide to the Modern World* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004), 103.

<sup>41</sup>Dr Syed Muḥammad 'Abdullah, et al., *Urdu Dā'ira Ma'āraf-i Islāmī* (Lahore: Punjab University, 1980), 14-I: 519.

<sup>42</sup>Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī, *The Socio Political Thoughts of Shāh Walī Ullah* (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), 45.

<sup>43</sup>Abū al-'Ulā 'Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn al-Arabī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 258.

<sup>44</sup>One may find this Hadīth in number of *Şūfī* writings nominating it as *Hadīth-i Qudsī*, while Ibn-Taimiyah added that this is not out of Prophetic narrations neither it has any reference of strong or weak Holy Saying (*al-Kubra* 5/88, *Mamjū'* *al-Fatāwā* 18/122).

<sup>45</sup>Şaḥīḥ Muslim, *Kitāb al-Aīmān*, Hadīth 91, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *al-Bir wa al-Şilah*, Hadīth 1998.

<sup>46</sup>'Afīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn al-Arabī*, 257, 261.

<sup>47</sup>Martin Lings and Clinton Minnar, *The Underlying Religion, An Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy* (Indiana: World Wisdom Bloomington, 2007), 257.

prohibited the arts. The Muslim also who are unaware of the aesthetics participation of Islam need be guided by Islamic scholars ('*Ulama*').<sup>48</sup>

It may be concluded that this attraction may be from physical objectivity or metaphysically or from both appearances towards that experience which leads man rationally into the realm of reality. The philosophy of Islamic aesthetics revolves around the ultimate beauty that is the beauty of Almighty Allah from whom all beautiful things are being sustained. And not only aesthetics but also various branches of knowledge were emerging without compromising the concept of Oneness of Allah Almighty, from the revelation that was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace and mercy be upon him).

### 5. Islamic Aesthetics vis-à-vis *Tawḥīd* as a Pivotal Discourse

Data of arts from alien culture was treated with good manner, trimming the irrelevancy off e.g. the art and aesthetics were rectified which was there due to any conflict with the concept of Oneness of Almighty Allah (*Tawḥīd*). To think that the Islamic art and beauty have the foundational background solely in the Greek and some other types of culture or from translation of other text into Arabic is not accurate examination, as the Islamic worldview about nature and cosmos is totally singular one and is due to the central belief of Oneness of Allah Almighty (*Tawḥīd*). Syed Naṣr in concluding remarks of '*Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*' adds that all the doctrines taken by the Muslims from various sources like Greek, Egyptian, Persian and Indian were treated under the central theme of *Tawḥīd* and the principle idea of the Oneness of Allah Almighty always dominates (in all respect).<sup>49</sup>

As newly flourishing Islamic culture in front of already prevailing aesthetic values managed to develop its own artistic forms consistent with its own religious creeds and symbols. Wajdan Ali remarked the Arabesque pattern with the sense of infinity indicates Divine Unity and doctrine of *Tawḥīd* and distinctive artistic traits within the framework of 'unity in diversity' and 'diversity in unity a solely Islamic creativity'.<sup>50</sup> As Dr Gulru Necipoglu added about aesthetic projection of Muslims that Averroes, Avicenna, al-Fārābī, al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Khuldūn, al-Jazarī, and Ibn al-Haytham were the most significant medieval Muslim authors. He admitted that, the work of these authors reflects aesthetic views and concepts related to architectural and decorative applications... quoting number of scholars he showed a pivotal relation of *Tawḥīd* with Islamic aesthetics?<sup>51</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>48</sup>Isma'īl Rājī Al-Fārūqī, *The Art of Islamic Civilization* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2013), 1-2.

<sup>49</sup>Syed Ḥossein Naṣr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrine* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1978), 280.

<sup>50</sup>Wijdan Ali, *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art: From the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*.

(Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1999), 63.

<sup>51</sup>Gulru Necipoglu, *The Top Kapi Scroll, Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 363–380.



it has also been disclosed that the Muslim philosophers have been proficient in the fields like medicine, philosophy and aesthetics.<sup>52</sup>

Islam supplied, fourteen hundreds years ago, the foundations for aesthetics and in the very beginning, Islam dealt with this essential aspects of human life in so beautiful way that with the passage of time, instead of human mental development, it has been the source to quench the thirst of human aesthetical sentiments (and natural needs). He stated that Islam gave a timeless solution for the aesthetics which is said to be the “*absolute status in the relativity of space and time*.”<sup>53</sup> However, various dimensions are also there but here we may quote briefly remarks of Isma‘il Rājī al-Fārūqī Islamic Aesthetics vis-à-vis *Tawhīd* as: “*We find that the whole iconography of Islamic art has been significantly influenced by the Qur’ānic doctrine of Tawhīd or Islamic monotheism.*”<sup>54</sup>

It has also been confessed by John William Draper in the history of conflict between science and religion that after six years of prophet’s demise, the Muslims’ developments were being admitted by the great scientists. He further added that, as prophet provided a ground for that advancement (in various fields of knowledge) by sowing the seed of the Oneness of Allah Almighty and extirpating the Idolatry... wine was prohibited.<sup>55</sup>

Definitely in addition to all attributes of Islamic aesthetic as indicated by Draper, the question of wine prohibition is also one of the main injunction of that culture which was being addressed under the Islamic injunctions associated with the central idea of Oneness of Allah Almighty (*Tawhīd*).

It can be inferred that Islamic weltanschauung is mutually linked with the concept of Oneness of Allah Almighty is the supreme creed of Islamic philosophy and basis of Islamic culture and civilization. Islamic Aesthetics is a distinct one due to *Tawhīd* as compared to the other religions and thoughts. Every cultural value coming towards Islam required to qualify the test in the light of paradigm of *Tawhīd*. This creed is related to the Ultimate Beauty and every splendor and good-looking reflection is relatively beautiful. This doctrine links God, man and cosmic beauty where the Qur’ānic guidance (*hidāyah*) plays significant role in order to know how to behave, protect and promote the aesthetic norms and values.

## 6. Religio-Aesthetic Chronology and its Socio-Cultural Impact

From the ancient history of dogmatic system and set of beliefs, it was being recorded that religious practices in connection with aesthetic sensation and value was the part and parcel of human experience. Theologians and the religious scholars have seriously considered art and aesthetics to be a fruitful field of inquiry. Recently religious scholars focused upon the theories of art and poetic metaphor to interpret thought and expression.

<sup>52</sup>Armstrong, *A History of God*, 129.

<sup>53</sup>Nāṣir, *Jamāliyyāt: Qur’ān kī Rawshanī Mēṇ*, 65.

<sup>54</sup>Al-Fārūqī, *The Art of Islamic Civilization*, 3.

<sup>55</sup>John William Draper, *The Conflict between Science and Religion* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), 86.

Brown correlates realm of the aesthetics to that of religion and he named the discourse as 'theological aesthetics' where his idea advocates that truth and aesthetic forms are not separable while aesthetic discernments may cause to further innovative thought.<sup>56</sup> Dealing this situation for Islam we may add to the light of paper authored by Fatemeh Nasrollahi that Islamic art and aesthetics have been surrounded with the concept of presence of Lord. Islamic structural designs are more than just an aesthetic appearance indicating towards reality linking physical space to metaphysical domain, projecting environmental, physical, social and cultural identity of the place.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, with reference to the Qur'ānic verse "Allah is light of heaven and earth..."<sup>58</sup> the design of *mihrāb* (a semi-circular niche in the front wall of mosque) is very significant to understand considering its symbolic physical setting reflecting Divine Presence in the mosque, Muslim place of worship and important entity of Islamic culture.<sup>59</sup> Hence, this is the unique characteristic of Islamic aesthetics that it indicates continuous consciousness and thought towards Ultimate Reality.

As the shapes, outlines, patterns along with rhythms, harmonies and surrounding milieu indicate towards creation of Allah Almighty without showing conflict with the nature. For example, interior of the construction of Islamic design, the courtyard may be called as the heart of the building, was open to the sky symbolizing the aspiration of the heart towards heaven.<sup>60</sup> We may add that Khalid Azzam highlights the metaphysical dimension of Islamic art and aesthetics focusing that there are something more and valuable associated with physical designs. Hence, the concept of Islamic aesthetics equally saturates the needs either corporal based or spiritual oriented.

In order to know, the role of the aesthetics in the lives of famous scientists and technologists and how they contributed to the cultural life one may find that Schrodinger was a weaver; Kekule was an architect; Herschel and Maxwell were photographers; and Kepler, Farady, Cajal, Ostwald and Pasteur were related to field of painting.<sup>61</sup> Regarding

<sup>56</sup>Frank Burch Brown, *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 41- 42, 114, 185.

<sup>57</sup>Fatemeh Nasrollahi, "Transcendent Soul of the Muslim Architect and Spiritual Impact of the Islamic Architecture: Islamic Architecture and Mundus Imaginal," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 3., no. 2 (December 2015): 99. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0005/c9e81a024ba65b999d7b1a5534141f952254.pdf>

<sup>58</sup>Al-Qur'ān: An-Nūr 24:35.

<sup>59</sup>Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Art and Beyond: Constructing the Study of Islamic Art* (England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 3: 183-184

<sup>60</sup>Khaled Azzam, *The Universal Principles of Islamic Art, for more detail please visit the following web address as:* <http://www.khaledazzam.net/architecture-tradition/universal-principles-of-islamic-art.php>

<sup>61</sup>Prof. Rolf A Faste, *The Role of Aesthetics in Engineering* (Japan: Society of Mechanical Engineers JSME Journal Winter, 1995). [http://www.haakonfaste.com/fastefoundation/publications/the\\_role\\_of\\_aesthetics.pdf](http://www.haakonfaste.com/fastefoundation/publications/the_role_of_aesthetics.pdf)

the impact of aesthetic values and art and religion on cultural development Michael Ranta also added as:

“Now, it is certainly questionable whether any art-specific considerations were discussed or had any explicit significance for the production of cultural artifacts in the West before the 5th century B.C. during the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods mainly pragmatic and magical-religious interests seem to have been the motivating factors for any cultural production.”<sup>62</sup>

History witnesses that communal life, culture and social styles of human kind and has been affected by beauty in various senses. The need of beauty for the humanity has great importance and value not less than the air that we breathe. Aesthetics should encompass the inner and outer requirement of man, while modern response is that one creates art just for the sake of art. There is an issue related to traditional history of civilization where art was the source of inner perfection and in the deepest sense the human requirement which is physical as well as spiritual.<sup>63</sup> Denis Dutton added that there are several methods for experiencing art easily along with cross culture boundaries without the support of theorists having worldwide acceptance. The Artists, writers, and musicians frequently have little or no difficulty in getting understanding regarding cross-cultural aesthetics.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, humanity as whole irrespective of race, colour and religion accepted the effects of art and aesthetics making change in their relevant culture and civilizations. The point is that what has been the role of thought or religion bringing them up in this regard. Islam has unique contribution to promoting and innovating aesthetic values at different levels.

For example, the studies of patterns of Islamic aesthetic design like architectural plan and mosque inner appealing shapes, one may also study from Moorish culture. Titus Burckhardt added the examples of Arabesque, use of mathematics for prayer time and to find the direction of *ka'bah*.<sup>65</sup> Draper also admitted that: “In the tenth century the Khalif Hakem II had made beautiful Andalusia the paradise of the world.”<sup>66</sup> How Islamic aesthetics is unique, Dr. Spahic Omer also put as: “Practically, Islamic architecture represents the religion of Islam that has been translated into reality at the hands of the Muslims. It also represents the identity of Islamic culture and civilization.”<sup>67</sup> While

<sup>62</sup>Michael Ranta, “Art, Aesthetic Value, and Beauty: On the Evolutionary Foundations of Narrative Resemblance Concepts,” in *Naturalizing Aesthetics*, ed., Ewa Chudoba and Krystyna Wilkoszewska (Cracow: Institute of Philosophy of Jagellonian University, 2015), 59.

<sup>63</sup>Syed Hossain Nasr, Ramin Jahanbegloo, *In Search of Sacred: In Search of the Sacred: A Conversation with Seyyed Hossein Nasr on his Life and Thought* (Praeger: Santa Barbara, 2010), 242.

<sup>64</sup>Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct. Beauty, Pleasure and Human Evolution* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), 51.

<sup>65</sup>Titus Burckhardt, *Moorish Culture in Spain* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, 141.

<sup>67</sup>Dr. Spahic Omer, “Islamic Architecture and the Prospect of its Revival today,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 104.

aesthetic sketch of Islamic building that something was totally newly developed, where dome is supported on a series of intersecting ribs and the hexafoil arches (six circular arcs to form a flower-like image) in two tiers a beautiful Islamic architecture as innovated first time.<sup>68</sup> Talbot Rice indicated the innovative and matchless ability and feature of Islamic aesthetics contributing remarkable role towards cultural uplift.

Samir Mahmoud concluded, “what has emerged from our heuristic exploration of aesthetics (*‘Ilm al-jamāl*) and beauty in classical Islamic thought is a much wider and more comprehensive notion of aesthetics than is commonly understood today.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the subject of Islamic aesthetics should never be ignored by western scholarship. The impact of Islamic aesthetic, however, expanded with the expansion of Muslim conquests to different civilizations. As one may imagine the situation of cultural development with aesthetics in the expression of John William Draper. According to him:

Europe at the present day does not offer more taste, more refinement, and more elegance, than might have been seen, at the epoch of which we are speaking, in the capitals of the Spanish Arabs. Their streets were lighted and solidly paved. The houses were frescoed and carpeted; they were warmed in winter by furnaces, and cooled in summer with perfumed air brought by underground pipes from flower-beds. They had baths, and libraries, and dining-halls, fountains of quicksilver and water.<sup>70</sup>

Dr Naṣr also added in relation to the Holy Qur'ān that, “*finally, it might be said that Islamic art is a demonstration of the truth of the Qur'ānic verse,(2:115)<sup>71</sup> in the ambience created by Islamic art over the centuries ... still survives here and there in the Islamic world.*”<sup>72</sup>The presence of Allah Almighty is everywhere and every pretty thing's depiction goes to the creator. So, Islamic cultural values are fundamentally associated with revealed guidance.

Aesthetics has to do with the entire spectrum of human perception which results in a useful step towards knowledge and how to feel, taste, smell, as well as to judge their appearance. Therefore, if engineers are desired to become more creative, it is essential that they should be sensitive to the question of aesthetic implications of their work and job along with polishing their personal intrinsic aesthetic capabilities. To exercise the aesthetic abilities is not just for emotional feelings and sensational requirements but also for surface modeling to execute their hidden abilities. Definitely, these characteristics ultimately

<sup>68</sup>D. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (n: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 77-79.

<sup>69</sup>Samir Mahmoud, “Beauty and Aesthetics in Classical Islamic Thought: An Introduction,” *Kalam Journal of Islamic Theology UAE Abu Dhabi* 1, (2018): 20 <https://journal.kalamresearch.com/beauty-and-aesthetics-in-classical-islamic-thought/>

<sup>70</sup>Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, 141.

<sup>71</sup>‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī, *The Holy Qur'ān: Arabic Text English Translation and Commentary*, (Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:115) trans. “*To Allah belong the east and the West: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allah. For Allah is all-Pervading, all-Knowing*”.

<sup>72</sup>Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe, *A Companion to World Philosophies*, 458.

generate socio-cultural promotion and development. So, the religio-aesthetic discourse has been the natural need of humanity for its socio-cultural betterment and moral par-excellence.

### 7. Concluding Remarks

This discourse makes it crystal clear that art and aesthetic values have been widely acknowledged in Islamic philosophy. The Muslim put their effort to make this branch of knowledge and philosophy better within the restrictions defined by the paradigm of Oneness of Allah. Islamic aesthetic values have been infused with its own epistemology having independent limitations expressing how Qur'ānic oriented thought knows and defines the things and their ugliness and beauty physically and metaphysically. Hence, the critics should never ignore the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of Islamic Aesthetics. The Qur'ānic Scripture as a precursor of Islamic aesthetics and *raison d'être* for Islamic culture. For understanding the situation, we may visit Qur'ānic references, Hadīth and scholars' and see how aesthetic values were imbued giving instructions exactly as required. It predicts the foundational background and history, what goes back to the Prophetic era, whereas timeline shows that Islamic civilization warmly welcomed any foreign sorts of aesthetics taking what is necessary and leaving what is not.

It may be added in the light of this discourse that all beautiful things have reflections from Divine Beauty, whereas aesthetical approach may enhance our imagination towards some important aspects of the reality. The manifestation prevailing everywhere may develop one's thought, which results in an inclination towards the concept of Ultimate Reality. So, the religion cum aesthetic discourse has been the natural need of humanity for its socio-cultural betterment and moral par-excellence. This historical sketch shows an inbuilt quality of Islamic Aesthetics to promote the value of art and beauty in the light of Scripture that may influence social life positively, e.g. Islamic development of gardens, its organization seems like the sketch drawn from Qur'ānic paradise. However, one may also examine on account of his own sound judgment that how Qur'ānic Scripture concerning Islamic aesthetics has self-explanatory clarifications and evidences of its origin and later historical promotion.

It is also concluded that the beauty and various aesthetic attractions from Islamic perspectives are connected to the physical objectivity or metaphysically or from both appearances towards that experience which leads man rationally into the realm of reality. The philosophy of Islamic aesthetics revolves around the ultimate beauty that is the beauty of Almighty Allah. So the prevailing reflections of beauty in the creation and universe depend on absolute beauty with remarkable relationship. Our cultural norms, garden beauty, architectural art may have apparent and physical expression of *Islamic aesthetics* while our ethics, morals and response to the environment may be called as metaphysical aspects. When the Holy Qur'ān narrates beauty of picture, creature and balance, it leads to the beauty of character as well. Therefore, to establish peaceful environment, maintaining

balance and security is one of the foremost duty and obligation of the man with respect to God, man, universe and guidance (*hidāyah*) nexus.

However, it is suggested that any cliché-ridden discussions of critics regarding Islamic aesthetics should have to re-visit their stance taking into account some fundamental queries like what are the provided inspirations from Islamic Scripture which caused to participate in this field; what are the practical evidences from cultural norms; the impacts of Islamic aesthetics accepted by other civilization as well as epistemological consideration from Qur'ānic perspectives along with bearing in mind similar factors for sound and transparent appraisal. Even a preliminary discourse may help us to examine how Islamic concept of aesthetics incorporates multiple aspects and what is the influence of the Holy Qur'ān upon aesthetic values making them Islamic one together with innovation and contribution exclusively in addition to know it's the impact upon art and culture. This religio-philosophical history shows an inbuilt quality of Islamic aesthetics to promote the value of art and beauty in the light of Islamic Scripture that may influence social life positively.

### Bibliography

- Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān bin 'Ash'ath bin 'Ishāq Al-Sijistānī. *Ṣunan Abī Dawūd*. Vol.1. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr 2009.
- 'Abdullah, Dr Syed Muḥammad, et al., *Urdu Dā'ira Ma'āraf-i Islāmī*. Lahore: Punjab University, 1980.
- 'Afīfī, Abū al-'Ulā. *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn al-Arabī*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939.
- Ahmad Ridzwan Othman, et al., "The Importance of Acoustic Design in the Mosques towards the Worshipers." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 234 (2016): 45-54.
- Ali, Wijdan. *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art: From the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1999.
- 'Alī, Abdulrahim. Iba Der Thiam and Yusof A. Talib. *The Different Aspects of the Islamic Culture* Vol 6. Beirut-Lebanon: UNESCO Printing, 2016.
- Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God: The 4000 year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. London: Random House Publishing Group, 1993.
- Asad, Muḥammad. *Islam at the Crossroads*. Gibraltar: Dār al-Andalus, 1982.
- Al-'Asqalānī Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin Ḥajr. *Bulūgh al-Marām min Adillat al-Aḥkām*. Saudia Arabia: Dār al-Qabs, 2014.
- Audi, Robert. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995/1999.



- Azzam, Khaled. *The Universal Principles of Islamic Art*. <http://www.khaledazzam.net/architecture-tradition/universal-principles-of-islamic-art.php>
- Bālbakī, Dr Rūhī, *Al-Mawārid*. Beirut Lebanon: Dār al-‘Ilm lil Malayīn, 2006.
- Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Brown, Frank Burch. *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning*. London: Macmillan, 1990.
- Al-Bukhārī, Abū Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl bin Ibrāhīm bin Muḡhaira. *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. Trans by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan Saudia Arabia: Maktaba Dār al-Salām, 1997.
- Burckhardt, Titus. *Moorish Culture in Spain*. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1997.
- Deutsch, Eliot., and Ron Bontekoe. *A Companion to World Philosophies*. John Wiley and Sons, Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Draper, John William. *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York: D. Appleton and Company Broadway, 1875.
- Du Pasquier, Roger. *Unveiling Islam*. Trans from French to English by T.J Winter. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001.
- Dutton, Denis. *The Art Instinct. Beauty, Pleasure and Human Evolution*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009.
- Al-Fārūqī, Isma‘īl Rājī. *The Art of Islamic Civilization*. London: International Institute of Islamic Thought IIIT, 2013.
- Faste, Rolf A. “The Role of Aesthetics in Engineering,” *Japan Society of Mechanical Engineers JSME Journal* (Winter, 1995), [http://www.haakonfaste.com/fastefoundation/publications/the\\_role\\_of\\_aesthetics.pdf](http://www.haakonfaste.com/fastefoundation/publications/the_role_of_aesthetics.pdf)
- Al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad. *The Socio Political Thoughts of Shāh Walī Ullah*. Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001.
- Grabar, Oleg. *Islamic Art and Beyond: Constructing the Study of Islamic Art*. Vol.3. England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006.
- Ḥanash, Id’hām Muḥammad. *The Theory of Islamic Art: Aesthetic Concepts and Epistemic Structure*. Trans Nancy Roberts. London, Islamic Institute of Islamic Thought 2017.
- Hofmann, Murad, *Islam the Alternative*. Pakistan: Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000.
- Ibn Āshūr, Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir. *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanvīr*. Vol., 27 Tunis: Dār al-Tunisia, 1984.

- Ibn Ḥibbān, Muḥammad bin 'Aḥmad Abū Ḥātim al-Bustī. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn-Ḥibbān* Vol.4. Beirut: Mawassisah al-Risāla, 1993.
- Ibn Mājah, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Yazīd bin 'Abdullāh al-Rab'ī al- Qazvīnī. *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. Egypt: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Kutab al-'Arabīah, 2010.
- Ibn Manzūr, Muḥammad bin Mukarram bin 'Alī bin Aḥmad. *Lisān al-'Arab*. Vol-11 Beirut: Dār al-Ṣadir, 1414AH.
- Ibn Taimiyah, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad bin 'Abdul Ḥalīm. *Mamjū' al-Fatāwā*. Saudia Arabia: Majma' al-Malak Fahd, 1995.
- Khaghani, Saeid. *Islamic Architecture in Iran*. New York: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017.
- Kermani, Navid, *God is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran*, trans. Tony Crawford. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.
- Lings, Martin. and Clinton Minnar. *The Underlying Religion, an Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy*. Indiana: World Wisdom Bloomington 2007.
- Mahmoud, Samir. "Beauty and Aesthetics in Classical Islamic Thought: An Introduction." *Kalam Journal of Islamic Theology UAE Abu Dhabi* 1, (2018), <https://journal.kalamresearch.com/beauty-and-aesthetics-in-classical-islamic-thought/>
- Al-Muslim, Abul Hussain Muslim bin al-Hajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. trans by Nasiruddin al-Khattab Riyadh: Maktaba Dār al-Salām, 2007.
- Nāṣir, Dr Naṣīr Aḥmad. *Jamāliyyāt: Qur'ān kī Rawshanī Mēn*. [Aesthetics in the Light of Qur'ān] Karachi: Infāq Foundation July, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tafsīr Ḥusn-i Qur'ān*. Vol. 2. Lahore: Ferozsons Limited, 1998.
- Naṣr, Syed Ḥussain, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*. Great Britain: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Search of Sacred: In Search of the Sacred: A Conversation with Seyyed Hossein Nasr on his Life and Thought*. Praeger: Santa Barbara, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Young Muslim Guide to the Modern World*. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004.
- Nasrollahi, Fatemeh. "Transcendent Soul of the Muslim Architect and Spiritual Impact of the Islamic Architecture: Islamic Architecture and Mundus Imaginal." *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 3, no. 2 (December 2015): 86-99. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0005/c9e81a024ba65b999d7b1a5534141f952254.pdf>
- Necipoglu, Gulru, *The Top Kapi Scroll, Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture*. Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995.
- Omer, Dr. Spahic. "Islamic Architecture and the Prospect of its Revival Today." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*. 1, no. 2, (Fall 2011): 1103-121.

Rice, D. Talbot. *Islamic Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975.

Al-Sha'rāwī, Muḥammad Matwalī. *Tafsīr al-Sha'rāwī* Egypt: Islamic Research Academy al-Azhar, 1991.

Al-Ṭabrānī, Abū 'l-Qāsim Sulaymān bin Aḥmad. *Al-Du'ā' lil-Ṭabrānī*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutab al-Ilmīyah, 1413.

Al-Tirmidhī, Muḥammad bin 'Isā. *Sunan al-Tirmadhī*. Cairo: Maktabah Muṣṭafa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī 1975.

Townsend, Dabney. *Historical Dictionary of Aesthetics*. Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006.

Yūsuf 'Alī, 'Abdullah. *The Holy Qur'ān: Arabic Text English Translation and Commentary*. Lahore: Ashraf Printing Press, 2006.