



The Essence of Art in Iqbal's Thought

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Abstract

Fine Arts are a vital means of expressing a nation's worldview, its aspirations, and its higher goals. They encompass five primary forms: music, painting, poetry, singing, and dance. This article, through an extensive review of literature and narrative analysis of both primary and secondary sources on Iqbal's philosophy of art and literature, delves into Iqbal's conceptions of art. It further explores how these ideas can remain relevant in contemporary times. Iqbal's views on art are intricately connected to his philosophy of Khudi (selfhood). For him, art is a powerful medium of expression, and any form of art that lacks self-awareness and self-reflection is undesirable. In Iqbal's philosophy, art that distances individuals from their true selves cannot be considered creative or valuable. Throughout his Persian and Urdu poetry, Iqbal examines various forms of art, highlighting both their positive and negative aspects. His rationale is rooted in his philosophy of Khudi, where he distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable forms of art based on their impact on one's personality and self. Art that strengthens the self is beneficial, while art that weakens or sedates the self is harmful and should not be pursued, according to Iqbal. He believes that such superficial art fails to touch the depths of personality and instead fosters chaos and confusion within individuals and society. Iqbal also notes that throughout history, the arts have been intertwined with various religions. He emphasizes that the finest expressions of art, like architecture, should embody both beauty and greatness (Dilbari and Qahiri). Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi can guide us in finding direction within the arts, helping us to create works that reflect the unique values of our culture and civilization as Muslims.

Keywords: Music, spirituality, Iqbal, art, painting, drama, muslim architecture

Art holds special significance in Pakistan, where it is expressed in various forms. Over time, significant changes have been observed in artistic trends, particularly in film and music, both of



which have become inseparable from technology. While Iqbal appreciated drama as an art form, it was not one of his primary interests. In Iqbal's view, an actor loses their identity by portraying someone else, which he saw as a denial of the self. For Iqbal, this act of self-forgetfulness and adopting a fictitious role was an insult to humanity. As a result, such rhetoric did not flourish for long in Islamic society, where personal integrity and self-identity hold a central place. Iqbal believed that media, including dramas, films, talk shows, and morning shows, often present narratives detached from reality, with individuals disguising themselves and denying their true personalities. According to Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi (selfhood), this denial of one's identity is a form of falsehood and deception, and individuals should never compromise their Khudi and personality.

Iqbal viewed art as a means to be powerful, purposeful, and connected to creative and developmental pursuits. He believed that all forms of art should serve a higher objective and contribute to society. He was strongly opposed to the notion of "art for art's sake," arguing that when nations are weak, they tend to engage in purposeless artistic endeavors, imitating others without originality or value. Iqbal regarded art as a natural requirement of the human soul, believing that a person cannot be complete without an understanding or appreciation of art. Nature has endowed humanity with the capacity to create and appreciate beauty, and this is an intrinsic need, not something imposed by society. For Iqbal, the artist possesses a divine attribute, and through this divine spontaneity, they create works that are later recognized as skillful. He associated originality with inspiration, believing that true art is inspired and divinely guided. Iqbal's opposition to imitation led him to reject major schools of thought in art, as he believed that art must be original and in service of Khudi. In his poem Theatre, Iqbal criticizes acting, suggesting that when a person loses their sense of self, art ceases to be creative. Thus, he considered drama to be a lower form of art, as it relies more on intellect than emotion and lacks sincerity, which is crucial for self-development. This form of art, according to Iqbal, does not engage with the depths of one's personality but instead creates a superficial external atmosphere.



Since the beginning of time, fine arts have been closely linked to religion. The finest examples of architecture combine both beauty and majesty, as seen in temples that blend aesthetic grace with grandeur. Stone carving, idol carving, and painting have long been associated with religious expressions, embodying the subtle concepts of art within the spiritual and cultural frameworks of society. Iqbal believed that art, when rooted in these deeper elements, could contribute to the growth of the self and, ultimately, the well-being of humanity.

In *Bandgi Nama*, Iqbal eloquently discusses the fine arts of music and painting, referring to all such arts that lead to despair as a form of death. For the first time, he offers a detailed critique of the arts produced by people bound in the chains of slavery. He states, "What can I tell about the arts of slavery? The arts of slavery are death; there is no revolution in their songs." Iqbal describes the face of a slave as being as dark as their heart, and similarly, the song of a slave is as lifeless as their nature. The spirit of the slave's heart has been extinguished. He believes that the music created under the conditions of slavery impacts society as a whole.

Iqbal further explains that this pitiful, melancholic symphony and the songs of slaves weaken him, fill him with a sense of frustration, and cause him to develop a disdain for the world. These songs steal the warmth from the heart and replace it with grief. According to Iqbal, poetry should not be static or confined to local themes; instead, its essence should lie in its charm, capable of elevating the spirit rather than depressing it. His critique highlights how art produced in conditions of subjugation loses its vitality and creative force, affecting both the individual and society.

Research questions

1. What are Iqbal's conceptions of art?
2. How are Iqbal's conceptions of art relevant to the current state of affairs in Pakistan?



Research Methodology

This article employs a historical and documentary analysis method. Using Iqbal's articles and essays, conclusions were drawn objectively. Both primary sources, including Iqbal's poetry and prose, as well as secondary sources such as articles and books relevant to Iqbal's conceptions of art and literature, were consulted for a comprehensive understanding of his views.

Iqbal's View on Art

Iqbal opposed the idea of imitation in art, emphasizing that excellence cannot be achieved by merely replicating the things found in nature. According to him, the real achievement of humanity lies in creating what nature itself could not. Since man is a higher, more conscious being than nature, he should not only take inspiration from it but also transcend its limitations by presenting beauty beyond what nature offers. Iqbal held that an artist should not mimic nature but should complete and complement it, utilizing human creativity and intelligence to enhance it⁽¹⁾. Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan, in *Rooh-e-Iqbal*, echoes this sentiment, stating that the artist's or poet's purpose is not to imitate nature but to express its inner reality. Nature, being formless, is given shape by the artist, and only through the heart and soul of the artist does nature's true essence come to life. ⁽²⁾

Iqbal's Objectives for Art

Many Western schools of thought focus on art as a means to create beautiful forms that provide joy and pleasure. However, Iqbal viewed the objectives of art differently. To him, art was a noble pursuit, and its purpose extended beyond mere pleasure. ⁽³⁾ Art, in Iqbal's philosophy, must be linked to higher knowledge and consciousness. He uses the metaphor of Gabriel, the bearer of divine knowledge, to emphasize that art should communicate deeper truths. After visiting the Cordoba Mosque, Iqbal found himself inspired by its grandeur, symbolizing the greatness of God, the honor and potential of humanity, and the power of human achievement. Thus, for Iqbal,



art should not only entertain but also provide knowledge, evoke higher emotions, and inspire action, motivating individuals toward self-improvement and societal development.

In the preface of *Murqa Chaghatai*, Iqbal has explained the concept of art in detail. Giving a chance to the visible to develop the invisible and to establish a relationship with regards to nature, which in the language of science is called compatibility or harmony, is in fact equivalent to admitting that nature has dominated the human spirit. The secret of human strength is to resist the impulses of nature and not to leave oneself at their mercy. What exists must be resisted so that what does not exist can be created. Doing so is health and life, anything else is decay and leads to death. Man is immortal. The artist that competes life is beneficial to humanity. Creation is one of the attributes of God. A creative individual's soul time and eternity are reflected. The modern era's artist gets inspiration from nature. However, nature is just "is" and its function is to obstruct our quest for what we do for it "What should be" and that which the artist finds in the depths of his being. (6)

Iqbal's Critique of Modern Art Forms

Iqbal was critical of certain modern art forms, such as theater, music, and cinema, particularly when they conflicted with his concept of *Khudi* (selfhood). He believed that theater and acting, which involved impersonation, were detrimental to personal growth. For Iqbal, self-discipline and self-development were vital, and art forms that encouraged individuals to act as someone else compromised their *Khudi*. Dr. Syed Abdullah, in *Taif Iqbal*, asserts that Iqbal was not entirely opposed to music or theater, but he was critical of how they often promoted physical pleasure or imitated reality, neglecting the deeper spiritual and intellectual potential of art. Iqbal's issue with these art forms was not with the medium itself but with how they were used in ways that diminished self-awareness. (4)

Dr. Syed Abdullah, Taif Iqbal explains, Iqbal deliberately did not like this title for himself, perhaps because his taste or his imagination did not like to be called a playwright. According to the concept of aesthetics, he considers it imitation after imitation. From this perspective, he is not



compatible to drama and also doesn't appreciate it much. He has written against cinema and theater also. Despicite this, due to his own artistic nature, he was the playwright himself. If he liked to be called a dramatist, he would be a dramatist like Goethe. His poetry not only contain allegorical content, but often in many of his poems, which can be said to be a slightly alteration drama, for example, Iblis Ki Majlis Shuri. There is quality of drama in his poems. Drama is a great art and its effects are far-reaching. We can say in a sense Iqbal also wrote plays. (5)

Iqbal's Appreciation of Arts

Javed Iqbal notes that his father had a fondness for listening to songs and played the sitar in his youth. Whenever Faqir Jamal Din played the gong, he would invite Javed to join him. Although Iqbal was not a painter, he appreciated the art and encouraged his son Javed Iqbal's interest in painting by ordering art books from England, France, and Italy (25). Painting, photography, and calligraphy, if done thoughtfully, have the potential for a bright future. Iqbal admired the calligraphy of Parveen Raqam and expressed a desire for all his books to be written by her.

Iqbal also valued the short story format, recognizing that narrating events is an effective way to convey meaning. The Quran presents accounts of earlier nations as stories, and Iqbal's work Javed Nama is written in the form of a drama, reflecting an essential part of Muslim Eastern literature. Iqbal, alongside his mentor Rumi, traverses various celestial bodies, seeking to understand and solve the issues facing the East, particularly the colonial oppression of the West and the decline of the dispersed Muslim Ummah. Justice Javed Iqbal translated Javed Nama into Urdu prose, aspiring to present it as a drama. This work is considered a modern Miraj Nama in Persian, and although there are many translations and commentaries in Urdu, a simple and engaging explanation of the ideas within Javed Nama is necessary for accessibility. This cosmic journey should resonate with the heart rather than merely the mind, as it addresses deeper



existential concerns. Similarly, Masnavi Maulana Rum follows this narrative style, and Asrar-e-Khudi and Ramuz-e-Bikhudi utilize fables and stories to convey their messages.

While Iqbal critiqued certain forms of art, he greatly appreciated others, especially poetry and architecture. Among the arts, poetry held a central place in Iqbal's creative expression. He believed that poetry, when purposeful and infused with a higher mission, could elevate the human spirit and connect individuals to God. Poetry, in his view, was not an escape from the world but a tool to uplift humanity. He writes that poetry is something that creates charm in the many difficulties and trials of human life and not the ideas of degradation and obsolescence. (7) In addition to poetry, Iqbal was also deeply inspired by architecture, particularly Islamic structures like the Cordoba Mosque. The magnificence of Islamic architecture symbolized for Iqbal the cultural and spiritual strength of the Muslim Ummah, reflecting his deep respect for the values and heritage of Islamic civilization, which can be seen continuously in his poetry and philosophy of life. (9)

Iqbal's Call for Purposeful Art

The artistis according to their tendency is so deeply impressed by a simple everyday incident that it becomes his inspiration. There have been experts who discovered new rhythms while perceiving colors and letters. Similarly, there are legends in the fields of painting and sculpture who created colors and structures by listening to music. This demonstrates that art, like life, is essentially one, even if it manifests differently in artistic and terminological forms. Likewise, the manifestations of national personality may differ, but their underlying reality remains the same. Iqbal has consistently appreciated such arts. He values energy, whether found within oneself or in others, in the world of nature or in the world of humanity. According to Iqbal, like the phenomena of life, the artist is not confined by logic; he seeks the harmony of his passion rather than that of logic. He controls reality through his passion; therefore, for him, the spirit of reality itself resides in passion.



Iqbal consistently emphasized that art must be purposeful. He rejected the idea of "art for art's sake" and criticized any form of art or literature that disconnected man from his higher purpose and relation to God. For Iqbal, art should contribute to the attainment of life's highest goals, particularly the cultivation of the self (Khudi). In his view, art should embody strength and power, protect the self, and guide individuals toward a meaningful existence (8). His poetry, infused with philosophical depth and moral purpose, exemplifies this approach to art. He believed that creative expression should not be a passive activity but a powerful force that motivates individuals and societies to reach their full potential.

دلبری بے قاہری جادوگری است
دلبری با قاہری پیغمبری است
ہر دو را درکار ہا آمیخت عشق
عالمے در عالمے انگیخت عشق! (15)

Translation: Beauty is sorcery without power. Beauty is prophetic with power. Passion has amalgamated both; passion has created another world within a world.

Iqbal explains that if beauty exists without the power to protect itself, it is merely flirtation and not beauty in the true sense. True beauty is that which possesses both grace and power. He compares this to a messenger who, even if he has a profound message, will be ineffective without the power to implement it. Iqbal argues that the combination of beauty and power is essential for the message to be heard and respected. Likewise, for true beauty to exist, it must have glory along with its charm.

Through *ishq* (passion), these two qualities—beauty (*dilbari*) and power (*qahiri*)—are blended together in harmony, creating a world within a world. This fusion is essential for positive outcomes, as neither beauty nor power alone can lead to lasting results. Whether in science or art, the amalgamation of both creates a balanced and meaningful existence.

Iqbal further elaborates on what art should be, stating that the art which is self-aware and contributes to self-development will find its own path. He writes:



رنگ ہو یا خشت و سنگ ، چنگ ہو یا حرف و صوت
معجزہ فن کی ہے خون جگر سے نمود (16)

In Zarb-e-Kaleem, Iqbal clarifies that true literature and art should serve life and be subject to the development of khudi (selfhood). He advises:

اگر خودی کی حفاظت کریں تو عین حیات
نہ کرسکیں تو سراپا فسوں و افسانہ
ہوئی ہے زیرِ فلک امتوں کی رسوائی
خودی سے جب ادب و دین ہوئے ہیں بیگانہ (17)

Iqbal praised Arab poetry, urging Muslims to adopt this style in their own literary and artistic endeavors. He emphasized that art should nourish the soul, have depth of thought, and be courageous in facing challenges. He conveyed to Muslims that their art should reflect the style and richness of Arab poetry, Art should be such that nurtures the soul of man, it has the depth of thought and the courage to face the situation, and Iqbal has also given the thought to Muslims that they should follow the style of Arab poetry. (18)

For Iqbal, art is vital for human society only when it reflects reality and holds the potential to spark revolution and reform in the life of nations. He never supported art that lulls people into complacency. Instead, Iqbal advocated for revolutionary art—art that embodies the struggles of life and possesses the capability to solve them. In Iqbal's opinion, poets and artists should possess a passion that leads the nation toward development rather than degradation. They should lay the foundation of their art in a way that reminds Muslims of their glorious past and fosters the transformation that is the essence of being a Muslim. According to Iqbal, the main purpose of the artist is to serve life. Through his poetry, he has authentically represented life, especially highlighting its element of freedom.

Iqbal's Perspective on the Architecture of Free Men (*Dar Fun-e-Tameer Mardan Azad*)

Iqbal believed that free nations have a duty to create art and architecture that reflect the true spirit of freedom. In this context, he praised the Masjid Quwat al-Islam, stating that it embodies



the essence of freedom. He admired how the stones are joined in such a way that an entire era is encapsulated in a single moment. In contrast, he showed little enthusiasm for the Mosque of Paris. In *Bandagi Nama*, while discussing the arts, Iqbal advised avoiding ideas that lack revolutionary potential, emphasizing that true art must inspire real change.

مرگ ہا اندر فنونِ بندگی
من چہ گوئم از فسوںِ بندگی
نغمہ او خالی از نارِ حیات
ہمچو سیل افتد بدیوارِ حیات (10)

Translation: Death is hidden in the arts of slaves; what should I say about the magic of slavery? The symphony of a slave's life is devoid of life's warmth, it strikes like a flood against the wall of life (and the wall does not survive).

In *Bandagi Nama*, under the section *Dar Fun e Tameer Mardan Azad*, Allama Iqbal delves into the aesthetic spirit of Muslim architecture and the concept of architecture as a reflection of free people. He draws attention to the buildings constructed by figures such as Qutbuddin Aibak and Sher Shah Suri. Specifically, Iqbal praises the achievements of Qutbuddin Aibak, alluding to the Quwatul Islam Mosque in Delhi, which exemplifies beauty and grandeur.

Iqbal reflects on the spirit behind such architectural masterpieces, expressing:

ایش را از خود برون آورده اند	این چنین خود را تماشا کرده اند
سنگها با سنگها پیوسته اند	روزگاری را بانی بسته اند
دیدن او پخته تر سازد ترا	در جهان دیگر اندازد ترا
نقش سوي نقشگر مي آورد	از ضمير او خير مي آورد
همت مردانه و طبع بلند	در دل سنگ اين دو لعل ارجمند (13)

Translation: They (the builders of these edifices) have revealed themselves through these constructions, thus expressing their inner selves. They have joined stone to stone in such a way



that an era has been enclosed in a single moment. Such buildings are constructed that time has no effect on them. Seeing these edifices strengthens your resolve and transports you into another realm. The design leads you to the designer and reveals the conscience of the creator. Masculine courage and elevated nature—these two precious gems are hidden within the heart of these stones.

In this verse, Iqbal emphasizes how the architectural achievements of free men are more than just physical structures; they encapsulate an era and transcend time, revealing the spirit and will of their creators.

In the following stanza, Iqbal also pays homage to the Taj Mahal, describing it as a unique gem. He highlights its beauty and durability, noting that a moment spent observing this structure leaves a lasting impression, making it more enduring than eternity itself. According to Iqbal, the Taj Mahal is not just a symbol of power or strength, but a masterpiece born of passionate love. He writes:

سنگ را با نوک مژگان سفته است	عشق مردان سر خود را گفته است
می کشاید نغمه با از سنگ و خشت	عشق مردان پاک و رنگین چون بهشت
حسن را هم پرده درهم پرده دار	عشق مردان نقد خوبان را عیار
از جهان چند و چون بیرون گذشت (14)	همتاو آنسو گردون گذشت

Translation: The passion of men has revealed its own secrets, stringing stones together with the tips of their eyelashes. The love of men is pure and colorful like paradise. It brings forth songs from stone and brick. The passion of men is the measure of beauty's worth; it both unveils and veils beauty. The courage of their love transcends the heavens and goes beyond the world of logic and reason.

Here, Iqbal explores the idea that passionate love, not mere power or strength, is what truly creates timeless masterpieces. The love that inspired the creation of the Taj Mahal is described as transcendent, defying time and space, and revealing feats that are indelible against the erosion of time.



In this poetic discourse, Iqbal praises the architectural wonders of free men, highlighting how they reflect not only technical prowess but also profound passion and higher purpose, making them enduring symbols of human spirit and creativity.

Iqbal's views on Music and Song

Iqbal argued that passion in music and the arts is essential, and he admonished enslaved nations, saying that their songs lack revolutionary fervor and movement, being devoid of true passion.

نغمه گر معنی ندارد مرده ایست
سوز او از آتش افسرده ایست
راز معنی مرشد رومی کشود
فکر من بر آستائش در سجود (11)

Translation: If a song has no meaning, it is dead. Its flame is the flame of an extinguished fire. The secret of meaning was revealed by Pir Rumi, upon whose shrine my thoughts bow in prostration.

For Iqbal, the distinction between an acceptable song (*Surud-e-Halal*) and a forbidden song (*Surud-e-Haram*) lies in whether or not it promotes the development and awareness of Khudi (the self). He viewed song as neutral, similar to knowledge and other forces of nature. Different types of music evoke different emotions and impressions, so music cannot be universally classified as either permissible or forbidden.

Surud-e-Halal is the kind of song that not only creates temporary excitement in the heart but also leaves a lasting impact, bringing true solace to life. Although temporary relief from grief or fear can be achieved through external means (like a sip of wine), Iqbal emphasized that true peace—permanent and deep—comes only from the maturity of faith. This kind of faith is strengthened in many ways, one of which is through *Surud-e-Halal*. A song of this nature frees a person from fear and grief.



In Bandagi Nama, Iqbal has told the slave nations that there is no instrumental and rythm in your song, its rythm is like that of a widow's cries and your poetry does not have the warmth and movement of life, it is very far from artistic skill.

According to Dr. Farman Fatehpuri, Iqbal's perspective on music is deeply rooted in his khudi philosophy. He believes that Iqbal sees both the beauty and ugliness of music and rhythm through this lens. Iqbal sees the beauty and ugliness of music and rhythm in the light of his khudi-philosophy. According to him, the true musician is the one whose conscience is pure and whose music scatters life on the face of the audience (19).

Iqbal expressed his hope for the birth of individuals within the nation whose songs could create this kind of lasting, life-affirming attraction in people's hearts. (12)

Religion of slaves (*Mazhab e Ghulaman*)

In this section, Iqbal maps out the religious life of those oppressed by slavery and subjugation. According to Iqbal, the religious life of a slave is stripped of vitality and dynamism. He highlights a stark difference between passionate love (Ishq) and religion in the lives of the enslaved. The most significant aspect is that the subjugated sell their religion and knowledge at cheap prices. Even though they may utter the name of Allah, their true Qibla is the power of their worldly rulers, before whom they bow in submission.

Iqbal explains that these rulers maintain control by creating divisions among people, sowing seeds of hatred in their hearts. These enslaved individuals become captives to their rulers' favor, to the point where their eyes and ears refuse to see or hear anything against them. They blindly follow their false leaders, closing their eyes to the truth.

Regarding the religion of slave nations, Iqbal states that they lack any real religion, self-awareness, or art. Instead, they are like living corpses, disconnected from their true selves. He reminds Muslims of their past greatness, noting that in earlier times, Muslim art was a complete



reflection of reality and demonstrated a quest for truth in every aspect. However, Iqbal asserts that the religion of slaves can never remain pure, as slavery turns them into flatterers, conspirators, and worshippers of the rising sun. Expecting true religious freedom under such conditions is futile.

This critique is tied to Iqbal's larger philosophical framework, where Khudi (selfhood) and independence are central to achieving true spiritual and intellectual freedom. Without self-realization, Iqbal believes, the enslaved cannot experience the fullness of religious life.

The Evolution of Islamic Architecture and Art

During the Umayyad era, Abdul Malik bin Marwan built the Dome of the Rock (*Qubat al-Sakhra*), a great masterpiece of Islamic architecture. At the beginning of the Islamic movement, architecture became the art that gained popularity. Although Roman contributions were very prominent before this, Muslims added vastness and purpose to it. This artistic expression began with mosques, primarily aimed at establishing social ties and facilitating congregational prayers. Muslims introduced new methods in mosque construction, including large courtyards for ablution, minarets, and domes, which were impressive for their time. Later, this art progressed further, incorporating arrangements for cold and hot water in baths and installing fountains in resting places. When Muslims went to Spain, they introduced this art to the West, with Qasr al-Hamra, the palaces of Cordoba and Granada, and the Great Mosque of Cordoba standing as masterpieces of this tradition. Today, numerous examples of this art can be found in India and the Ottoman Empire. (21)

Art is not merely an expression of thoughts; it encapsulates all the feelings and emotions tied to the struggles and realities of human beings. Wherever Muslims traveled, they were inspired by local musicality and adopted it, without attempting to create a distinct Islamic music but rather maintaining previous traditions. (22) The arts should aim to eliminate all negative emotions within individuals, allowing them to perceive reality more clearly.



Muslims have presented art in such a way that it helps individuals understand the greatness of God and His majesty. Many artworks inspire awe, prompting a deep recognition of the humility of human beings before their Creator. The antiquities of old times reflect the nature of past societies, and even today, we encounter similar challenges. With this in mind, we must promote behaviors in arts and literature that create positive change for future generations and reflect a high civilization.

Iqbal has always encouraged arts that create profound transformations in individuals, channeling human emotions into positive energy and goal-oriented behavior while eliminating negativity. A true artist transcends mere ritualism or atheism, achieving a perfection in art that enables the human soul to transcend internal struggles and attain the gnosis of God. In the present age, Islamic architecture remains at the forefront, surpassing other art forms.

Iqbal consistently advocated for arts that provoke profound transformations in individuals, channeling human emotions into positive energy and purposeful behavior while eliminating negativity. A true artist transcends ritualistic religion or atheism, creating a perfection in art that leads the human soul to a deeper understanding of God. In the contemporary age, Islamic architecture remains at the forefront, surpassing other art forms.

Another important art is painting. As far as the art of painting is concerned, there was forbidden among Muslims to make pictures of living beings because this form led to idolatry and Islam did not want humanity to go towards disbelief and evil. Therefore, instead of making idols, Islam suggested bringing out their meaning and essence. For examples the interesting illustrations of the God's universe and beautiful buildings. Allegorical depictions of different scenes and interesting plants in the palaces of the kings and images of inanimate objects. Although some kings also got painted pictures of humans and animals in their courts, scholars of any era never appreciated them. Book painting was also common in Islamic civilization and it became a part of Islamic civilization with respect to Iranian civilization. In book painting, pictures were also made along with the book text for explanation, for example, Kulliyat e Saadi, Shah Nama Ferdowsi,



Qasas al-Anbiyyah and books about medical field this method was adopted. The third important art was calligraphy. In this art, words were organized with a special composition of words that created beauty in a work of art. Due to its connection with the Quran, this art was very popular among Muslims. Great calligraphers used to present the Quranic verses in a beautiful way. Due to the prohibition of making pictures of living beings, people used to express themselves through calligraphy. In Roman civilization, the walls were decorated with pictures of animals, Muslims set the tradition to decorate the walls with calligraphy. (23)

The State of Arts in Pakistan

Pakistan is an independent country with a rich cultural heritage, including the traditions of stone carving and idol-making. Calligraphy is also prominent, enhancing the beauty of tall buildings with domes and intricate arches in mosques. However, there is a noticeable lack of unique work in stone carving that features Quranic verses. Aside from tombs and a few government buildings, a clear imitation of European styles is evident in public houses and grand structures. As an Islamic nation, it is essential to prioritize this aspect of artistic expression. *Mahfil-e-Sama'* holds particular significance in the traditions of the Chishti Mashaikhs of the subcontinent. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was himself a talented poet, and gatherings at his *khanqah* included *Qawwali*, which the Chishti Sufis identified as acceptable music.

According to Khalifa Abdul Hakim, if someone looks at our painting art, they will not see the perspective of the nation, its wishes and aspirations anywhere. Painting could not get much development in Islamic civilization. When attention was paid to painting here in modern times, it was mostly a blind imitation of the western schools. There has come a period in western painting which our painters have started imitating. A western critic looked at these pictures of our painters and said that it is a successful or unsuccessful imitation of various schools of west. The fact of the matter is that when the nation does not realize its Khudi and art does not mirror its specific aspirations and worldview, till then painting cannot become a representer of life (20).



Unfortunately, the Pakistani drama industry often promotes shallow and misleading ideas. Non-issues dominate discussions, and there is a lack of relevant, creative themes and well-crafted scripts. Sometimes, vices and social taboos are glorified and normalized. However, some recent Turkish dramas have inspired the spirit of jihad in the new generation, indicating a potential for change. There is a pressing need for dramas that reflect purpose, ethics, and civics. If dramas were produced with these values, their future could also be bright, promoting our culture and traditions. If these works of performing art contain moral lessons and address social issues, there is hope for improvement in society. In cinema, heroes and heroines should address global problems through their roles.

Iqbal has written against mimicry, not against the play itself. He links genuine talent with a sense of self, life, and the universe, emphasizing that the practical expression of life should manifest in the arts. In this realm, our clothing, music, design, and calligraphy all hold significant importance. However, today's music often serves merely as a backdrop for dancing and singing. Islam has never banned fine arts; instead, it has placed constraints on the human spirit to prevent emotional excesses that lead to imbalance and intemperance.

Iqbal critiques the artwork of those who lack creativity and imagination, suggesting that such works reflect uncertainty. An uncertain individual does not know their identity and seeks beauty externally, whereas, as a creative being, this beauty should emanate from within. He considers impersonation to be akin to death. Conversely, true artists enhance the beauty of nature through their skill, revealing its secrets and facilitating new inventions and discoveries. They breathe new life into the human heart, showcasing scenes that the naked eye cannot perceive.

In today's age, the mental stress, chaos, indecency, and the commodification of honor and reputation promoted in the name of art pose a significant threat to our civilization, culture, religion, and society. We are accountable for the destruction that has been set forth. Art possesses its own identity and does not require external validation. If we address these issues, the outcomes could be positive.



Pakistan is rich in intelligence, but there is a pressing need to correct our worldview. We must abandon imitations and invent our own art, focusing on issues that drive us toward progress. Rather than mimic the West, we should promote our own Islamic art. Iqbal's ideas can help clarify our vision and play an important role in society. If the performing arts are presented within the context of Iqbal's thought, the results could be transformative. His concepts of art offer significant guidance to painters, calligraphers, singers, and musicians in Pakistan. The art industry could greatly benefit from this research, as Iqbal encourages the abandonment of the arts associated with slave nations.

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