



An Ontological Analysis of the Relationship between Qur'ān and Art

Akbar Sajedi¹; Mehdi Ghahraman²

¹ Member of the Center for the Development of Interdisciplinary Research in Islamic Sciences and Health Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Education, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Education, Sahand University of Technology, Tabriz, Iran

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i4.2449>

Abstract

Qur'ān as the most important Islamic document is the eternal miracle of the Prophet of Islam. Being the word of the all-Wise God, this Heavenly book was revealed in the most beautiful form, just as the world has been created in the best possible way. On the other hand, the man who is the addressee of Qur'ān loves it because he innately loves beauty. He, therefore, dedicates his best arts to Qur'ān. The present analytical study aimed to introduce the arts created and developed for Qur'ān and to investigate the reason for their development from ontological point of view. Recitation, inscription, and illumination are considered the most important arts of Qur'ān, which have been developed due to the beauty of Qur'ān. The results indicated that both religious information has encouraged the artistic behavior of the human towards Qur'ān and his rational perceptions have emphasized it.

Keywords: *Qur'ān; Beauty; Art; Recitation; Inscription; Illumination*

Introduction

Although the phrase "Qur'ān is an artwork" may not be appropriate for the glory and holiness of Qur'ān, its eloquence and rhetoric have amazed those familiar with the aesthetics of discourse. If Qur'ān is the word of God, who describes Himself as "the best of creators, (*Qur'ān*, 23: 14) Qur'ān must accordingly be "the best of discourses" (*Qur'ān*, 39:23). The nicety and elegance of Qur'ān- both in terms of content and themes and form and format- has made it a unique artwork. The All-knowing creator has manifested the genesis and decree of His beauty and glory in two books. First, the natural world with all its vastness is a manifestation of His beauty and glory. Second, the great Qur'ān with its chapters and verses is an indication of the art- and beauty-Lover Creator. While the natural world manifests the Creator of the universe by such signs as the sun, moon, night, morning brightness, thunder, ant, bee, elephant, spider, etc. Qur'ān has used the same names as the titles of its chapters. In fact, the titles of the chapters of Qur'ān are the Divine signs, since everything in the world is the sign of God. The Almighty God has presented manifestations of his beauty and glory through nature and Qur'ān.

Moreover, man inherently loves beauty and perfection. By the Divine wisdom, man as the addressee of Qur'ān is receptive to it since Qur'ān is beautiful. Given that all the verses of Qur'ān are in accordance with the sense of aesthetic of the man, the virtuous man has done his best to use all his virtuosity to promote the beauties of Qur'ān throughout history. Recitation of Qur'ān in an enchanting tone and harmony, as well as inscription and calligraphy of the Qur'ānic verses, are some examples of the arts arising from the man's nature. It can be asserted that the artistic beauties of the man are in response to the artistic beauties of Qur'ān. The present paper aimed to study the relationship between Qur'ān and art from an ontological point of view. Investigating the nature of such a relationship can shed some light on the response presented for the main research question.

Definition of the Terms and Concepts

a. Art: Art literary means identification of all the practical laws related to career, techniques, and knowledge which are delicate and elegant. (*Mo'in*, 1996: V. 4, p. 5208) There are different ideas about the figurative sense of art, which indicates the invisibility of the art in its visibility due to its broadness and delicacy. Some state that "in man's experience, art is a specific way of telling the facts of life, which relies on imagination". (Bostani, 1994: P. 12) It seems that art is both spiritual and a human activity. Just like literature and mysticism, it is based on intuition and virtuosity. In addition, art is considered as Presential Knowledge, not Representational Knowledge. Thus, most of the definitions offered by the thinkers are not logical, rather are descriptive and based on virtuosity. Art has Divine origin and is an activity done by the man to reduce the grief of separation. Art is a set of man-made works and processes which affect man's emotions, feelings, and intelligence, or conveys a meaning or concept. Accordingly, different definitions and views have been presented about art.

The work of art can be considered as the second version of creation and the third version of existence. It is worth mentioning that the first and main version of existence is the Supreme Being, and the second version is the act of God, particularly the human being. This is confirmed by the holy Hadith in which God says, "I was a hidden treasure, I wanted to be known, so I created the creation [mankind]" (Qur'ān, 23:14), the Qur'ānic verse which goes, "So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!" (Kuleini, 1987: V. 1, p. 134), or the narrative which states, "God created man similar to Himself", as well as the Qur'ānic verse which says "When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth,'" (Qur'ān, 2:30)

Existence is created by God. Man is God's *caliph* and is God-like. Art is created by the caliph of God, who

"is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Former. To Him belong the Best Names. Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Him and [whatever there is in] the earth, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise." (Qur'ān, 59: 24)

Art is the recreation or representation of an object or meaning in its perfect form. Art means to create, to present, to make, and to invent. It is sometimes the primitive creation, sometimes it is the recreation, yet some other times, it's the representation of the true aspect of truth. The artist is the creator, maker, and re-presenter. The subject of this creation, whatever it is, is a truth that enjoys the desired perfection. If the creature is recreated for the sake of reaching the desired perfection, it is considered artistic. The closer the recreation is to the desired perfection and the truth, the more artistic it is. The reason that the beauty, art, aesthetics, and artistry are interwoven is that the closer something is to its perfection, the more beautiful and pleasant it is. Accordingly, beauty is nothing but perfection. Therefore, if the recreation of something is perfect or close to its desired perfection, i.e. (almost) similar to the truth of its existence, it will look more beautiful. (Rashad, 2016: p. 7)

b. Islamic art: The phrase "Islamic art" was first used and investigated by the Orientalists. Western scholars have studied Islamic art since the nineteenth century. In the last decades, Muslim scholars who had educated in the West have done studies on Islamic Art. (Nasr. 1997: P. 7) In other words, this name- i.e., Islamic art- has not been recognized by its inventors, rather the term "Islamic art" was first defined in British academia. It was later defined by French Scholars- who were the first academic researcher of Islamic works- and, then, by other western scholars. Finally, Islamic art extended to include the definition of Islamic art and architecture. (Richard Ettinghausen,2000: p. 10) Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the Islamic art and find the answer to "what Islamic art is". Understanding the different aspects and cognitive features of the Islamic art is an important step in using this ever-flowing spring in the present time. (Mahdavi, 2016: P. 148)

Islamic art has a deep relationship with Qur'ān, to the extent that Burckhardt states, "the visual art of Islam is merely the visual reflection of the words of Qur'ān and nothing more".(Burckhardt,1991:P. 77)

c. Divine arts of Qur'ān: Qur'ānic arts can be divided into the Divine arts and the human arts. Sometimes the beauties of Qur'ān originate from Qur'ān itself. For example, the aspects of the eloquence and rhetoric of Qur'ān which are referred to as the aspects of miracle of the holy Qur'ān are the Divine arts of Qur'ān. These arts are characteristically attributed to the Almighty God and are naturally based on His Wisdom.

d. Human arts of Qur'ān: there are some Qur'ānic arts which have been created by the man. These arts are attributed to the man, so they are called human arts. Inscription, recitation, and illumination, among others, are examples of the human arts of Qur'ān.

Review of the Literature

Many scholars and thinkers have focused on Islamic art. This kind of research is conducted not only by Muslim thinkers but also by the Orientalists and Western Islamogists. If one searches the shelves of the libraries or the digital sources, he will find ample research studies on the Islamic art, which have used different approaches. Although a complete report about this set of researches is somehow impossible and beyond the scope of the present study, reviewing some of the most important studies will shed light on the related literature.

Splendours of Qur'an Calligraphy and Illumination, Martin Lings: One of the most important works presented at the Islamic world festival in London in 1976 is Lings' book titled "*Splendours of Qur'an Calligraphy and Illumination*",(Lings, 1999) which was published the same very year. The festival was held by some scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Titus Burckhardt to commemorate the fourteenth century of the Islamic culture life. Lings, a sincere Muslim, wrote the book with his rich knowledge, virtuosity, and mental health. After working as a curator in the department of *Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts*, British Museum, for many years, Lings published several books on the Islamic culture. One of the most important works of Lings is a book about the Splendours of Qur'an calligraphy, inscription, and illumination. Lings argues that calligraphy and illumination along with architecture are the most important achievements of Islamic civilization. Although calligraphy and illumination have more direct relationships with the message of Islam, which has been revealed to the man in the form of words, they have not been focused on as much as the Islamic architecture. Lings attempts to study the best calligraphies and illuminations available throughout the Islamic world and to interpret their exterior and interior meanings and messages. His success in doing so resulted from his familiarity with the religious meanings, his long-term exposure to the manuscripts, and his knowledge about Ibn Arabi's theoretical mysticism. (Lings,1999: pp. 9-10)

Art of Islam, Language and Meaning, Titus Burckhardt: Titus Burckhardt, a Swiss-German, did research on Islamic art, architecture and civilization. Meeting Frithjof Schuon, he joined the traditionalists and the followers of *Sophia Perennis (khalida)*. Burckhardt wrote many books in English, German, and French, some of which have been translated into Persian. One of his most important books is *Art of Islam, Language and Meaning*. (Burckhardt, 1987) Burckhardt believes that the Islamic art manifests the Divine Unity in the beauty and the order of the universe and that art should help the spirit to get rid of multiplicity and resort to infinite unity. Thus, the absence of images in the mosques, as well as the reluctance to use the iconography of the Prophets and the Divine Saints are aimed to eliminate any imagined presence before the invisible presence of God. Accordingly, the geometric shapes and abstract images of animals and plants flourished in Islamic art. Some of these patterns are interwoven and chained geometric shapes, which are the most obvious symbols of unity in the face of multiplicity. Another type of these patterns is the images of the flowers and plants, which do not completely resemble the natural flowers and plants, since the artist avoids complete imitation of the works of the Creator. According to Burckhardt, the disuse of the three-dimensional technique and contrast in Islamic art has resulted from the religious thoughts. (Burckhardt, 1991)

Islamic Art and Architecture, Oleg Grabar: In his article titled "Islamic Art and Architecture" (Grabar, 2006: 51-80), Oleg Grabar examines the direct and indirect reference of Qur'anic verse to art and architecture. In this study Grabar investigates the effect and application of Qur'ān in the art and architecture, and, in so doing, refers to some of the Islamic inscriptions and buildings and their features. Grabar also discusses the usage of art in the adornment of Qur'ān.

The moral Role of art in cultural excellence, Hassan Bolkhari: the relationship between art and ethics has been one the most important and fundamental theoretical issues of art from the ancient time up to the present day. The remarkable effect of art and the artworks on the emotions and feelings of the man, as well as its unique power in turning ideas into actions, more importantly, in establishing the ethical teachings and even deepening the ethical perceptions are some of the main factors indicating the importance of art. Different theories have been proposed to explain the relationship between the two. Some of these theories focus on the ethical function of art and, inevitably, its limitations and restrictions, as well as its role in deepening the beliefs and ethical perceptions. It is worth mentioning that the main theories in this regard are discussed in the present study. Some others, influenced by the emergence of "personal art" in the modern world (which is the product of resorting to the reason and analysis-based science, and, in turn, produces such theories as Art for *art's sake*), talk about the need to either separate the moral and aesthetic aspects of works of art or its decline. In this study, the given theories are examined and criticized, and the emphasis is on the theory in which moral and human values play important roles, based on rational reasoning. (Bolkhari, 2011: P. 163-178)

The aforementioned works are only a small part of the bulk of researches in the field of the Islamic arts since the topics of Islam and art are too broad to be listed in one category. Islamic arts are divided into Divine arts and human arts. The aforementioned studies belong to the latter category. On the other hand, if you look at this topic from a different perspective, and add the Divine arts to it, the aesthetic themes of the Qur'ān such as its eloquence, rhetoric, and the aspects of the miracle will also be added to it. Anyway, the advantage of the present study over the previous researches is the way it examines the Islamic arts. This study attempts to investigate the relationship between Qur'ān and art from the ontological point of view. What has caused the man to treat Qur'ān aesthetically and create artworks?

Introducing the Human Arts of Qur'ān

There are some Qur'ān-centered arts which have been created as a result of the Muslim's interest in Qur'ān and have evolved gradually. Recitation, inscription, illumination, and other kinds of arts such as

painting, architecture, and Marquetry are examples of the human arts of Qur'ān. Although these arts were not as beautiful as they are today in the past centuries, they owe their present beauty to the efforts of the predecessors.

a. Recitation: recitation can be considered as one of the oldest Islamic arts. Qur'ān primarily was preached and explained orally through recitation. Thus, Qur'ān recitation preceded its inscription. In other words, early Muslims didn't recite Qur'ān from its writings, rather wrote it based on its recitations. This claim can be approved by reviewing the history and, more importantly, by referring to Qur'ānic verses, and even the name of Qur'ān. Qur'ān is an Arabic word stemming from the root "قرأ" (*Qara'*) meaning something that is read. (Fayyūmī, 1993: p. 502) That is, Qur'ān is something to be read, rather than being a book. The first verse revealed to the Prophet ordered him to read. (Qur'ān, 96:1) Qur'ān has called him *the uninstructed prophet* (Qur'ān, 7:157) who had not been trained in any school (*did not use to recite any scripture before it, nor did you write it with your right hand*) (Qur'ān, 29:48), yet one of his duties was to teach and recite Qur'ān (*to recite to them His signs,, and to teach them the Book and wisdom*). (Qur'ān, 62:2) That is to say, the Prophet did not read from the text of the book, rather from the source of the revelation and inspiration. Some evidence from the Qur'ānic verses, Hadiths, and the history of Islam indicates that reciting Qur'ān aloud with a beautiful voice prevailed among the Muslims from early Islam. This issue will be discussed in the next sections.

Although in early Islam, there were no such things as melodic modes, modal system instruments, collection of old melodic figures as there are today, the aesthetic sense of the addressees was surely responded in a way. Today, the masters of recitation, both in Egypt and other Islamic countries, assert that the melodic modes should be selected based on the content and the theme of the verses. Any theme cannot be recited by any tone. A professional reciter of Qur'ān is the one who can convey the theme of the verse by using an appropriate tone and a musical modal system. (Hesam Pour, 2011: p. 86) Qur'ān recitation, particularly in Egypt and Iran, has resulted in some lasting masterpieces. Works of some masters such as Mustafa Isma'il and Abd al-Basit al-Minshawi will never be forgotten.

b. Inscription and calligraphy: After the stage of recitation of Qur'ān, the second stage started which was to inscribe Qur'ān text. This stage began when the Prophet was alive. Although there are ample debates and disagreements about the Qur'ān, different Islamic sects and schools unanimously agree that the Qur'ān which is available today is exactly the one revealed to the Prophet. (Ma'refat, 2002: p. 139) It can be said that at the time of the Prophet and the first and second century, Qur'ān was written in the *Kufic* script. The ambiguity and difficulties of reciting from it resulted in the establishment of the organization of preservation and recitation of Qur'ān. However, this organization was not able to completely resolve the ambiguity of the *Kufic* script. In those centuries, it was only the memorizer (*Hafiz*) and reciter of Qur'ān who could recite it correctly. But other people couldn't recite it easily. In the late first century, this problem was partially resolved by developing the rules of the writing system done by Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali under the instruction of Imam Ali. (Tabatabai, 2011: p. 164)

Given what was mentioned above, one cannot talk about then-calligraphy and aesthetic issues based on the modern sense of aesthetic. Of course, Islamic teachings had set the scene for it. Some of the narrative teachings encourage the artistic and aesthetic aspects of the inscription of Qur'ān. There is a narrative by the Prophet, saying: "whoever writes *"In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful"* in beautiful handwriting just for God's sake, God will forgive his sins". (Majlisi, 2016: V. 89, p. 35) These teachings, on the one hand, and the pure-natured Muslims' interest in keeping and preserving this Heavenly Message, on the other hand, resulted in the creation of some artistic masterpieces in Qur'ān handwriting and calligraphy. Today, few Islamic arts can be found that are as advanced as calligraphy. Since the Divine Word, i.e., Qur'ān, is the foundation of Islam, Qur'ān calligraphy is naturally the most important art of Islamic civilization. (Lings, 1999: P. 12)

This claim can be confirmed by a search in the museums of Qur'ān and Qur'ānic inscription, such as the Museum of Qur'ān and valuable texts of *Astan Quds Razavi*. The thousands-year-old valuable Qur'ān manuscripts fascinate every visitor and partly manifest the glory of Qur'ānic verses. The Qur'ān written in *Baysunghur's Thuluth* inscript, the size of which is much larger than usual, is only one example of the heritage remained from Timurid era, which is kept in the museum of *Astan Quds Razavi* (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Part of the Qur'ān written in *Baysunghur's Thuluth* inscript

c. Illumination: No precise definition can be found for this term in dictionaries to trace us back to the origin of this art. In some ancient books, mostly the biographies, only names of a few painters and illumination practitioners have been mentioned, by which one cannot gain any insight on the meaning of illumination. *Tadhīb* (Illumination) is an Arabic term; it is an infinitive derived from "*dhahab*" root and is formed based on "*Tafīl*". *Dhahab* means gold, and *Tadhīb* refers to gilding. (Bostani, 1997: p. 411) Gold is a bright color that has a special value, that's why illumination is considered as gilding. (Mayel Herawi, 1994: p. 42) If we want to present a brief definition for illumination, it should be defined as drawing, coloring, gilding, polishing, and engraving various delicate designs from plant motifs (Arabques and Khatayi) to geometrical designs (different types of knots), and, sometimes, animal or human motifs to decorate different surfaces. (Mojarrad Takestani, 2005: p. 26) Illumination can be considered as a set of original and beautiful designs which the painters and illumination practitioners use to make Qur'ān and other religious, scientific, cultural, history, books, poetry collections, calligraphy works more appealing (see, figure 2). Illumination masters use these beautiful sets of designs to make the golden pages of the everlasting literature and religious texts visually appealing. Thus, the margins of the pages are decorated using such motifs as the Arabques branches and Khatayi thalus, flowers and leaves, Arabques branches, and Khatayi flowers, or Arabques-Khatayi branches.



Figure 2. Qur'ān illumination, Timurid era style

Analysis of the Human arts of Qur'ān

In responding to the question "why were human arts of Qur'ān formed?", there are two possible analyses: 1. Narrative analysis based on Islamic teachings, and 2. Rational analysis based on the man's findings.

A. Narrative Analysis Based on the Divine Data

One of the analyses of the human arts of Qur'ān is to refer to the Islamic teachings. Islamic teachings always emphasize the relationship between art and Qur'ān.

a. Direct Encouragement to Use Art in Qur'ān

As was mentioned above, recitation, inscription, and illumination can be viewed as the most prominent Qur'ānic arts. The art of recitation is the first Qur'ānic art that many religious teachings, along with Qur'ān itself, have encouraged us to do. For example, Qur'ān orders us to "... *recite the Qur'ān in a measured tone*" (Qur'ān, 73:4). In explaining the meaning of recitation, Ṭabarsi quotes a Hadith from Imam Sadiq (As): " regarding recitation in a measured tone, Imam Sadiq (As) stated: recitation is to read Qur'ān slowly and with a beautiful tone". (Tabarsi, 1994: V. 10, p. 569) The Prophet (PBUH) also repeatedly emphasized to recite Qur'ān with a beautiful and enchanting voice: "Adorn Qur'ān with your beautiful voice, since beautiful voice adds to the beauty of Qur'ān". (Sho'eiri, nd: p. 49) Again in another Hadith, the holy Prophet stated: "there is an adornment for everything, the adornment of Qur'ān is a beautiful voice". (Kuleinī, 1987: V. 2, p. 615)

These teachings directly encourage the audience of Qur'ān to behave Qur'ān artistically. The glory and sanctity of Qur'ān require such behavior. The holy Prophet of Islam not only encourages us to recite Qur'ān with a beautiful voice but also emphasizes rinsing the mouth before reciting Qur'ān. According to a Hadith, the Prophet states: "cleanse the path of Qur'ān. It was asked: what is the path of Qur'ān? He said: you mouth, cleanse your mouth by it". (Barqi, 2005: V. 2, p. 588)

Practical Life of the Prophet and *Ahl al-bayt* indicates that they recited Qur'ān with a beautiful and enchanting voice. According to the history of Islam, the holy Prophet recited Qur'ān very pleasantly to the extent that not only the Muslims enjoyed listening to it, but also the pagans of Mecca secretly and without informing each other congregated out of his house to listen to his recitation (Ibn Hisham, nd: V. 1, p. 315). It is also narrated that Imam Kazim (AS) recited Qur'ān very beautifully. Once he said: "Indeed, Imam Sajjad (AS) recited Qur'ān with such an enchanting voice that sometimes the listeners got ecstatic, and fell." (Tabarsi. 1983: V.2, p. 395)

The larynx of the Qur'ān reciter, on the one hand, and his spiritual fear and piety and sanctity and purity, on the other hand, are the important factors affecting the heavenly celestial music of Qur'ān. Spiritual fear has a significant effect on spiritual development. The voice of a pious, fearful, and loving spirit is so enchanting and attractive that the listener gets ecstatic. It is said that when Imam Sajjad (AS) recited Qur'ān, the water-carriers stopped by his house while carrying heavy Water skins on their shoulders. They got so engrossed in the recitation that they forgot the heaviness of their load. (Kuleinī, 1987: V. 2, p. 616). This reminds us of a scene in the story of Joseph. According to Qur'ān, when Egyptian women saw Joseph, "they marveled at him and cut their hands [absent-mindedly], and they said, 'Good heavens! This is not a human being! This is but a noble angel!'" (Qur'ān, 12: 31)

Yes, a pleasant voice is one of the factors affecting the souls and hearts of the listeners of Qur'ān recitation, provided that the reciter himself is affected by his recitation. There is a narration, saying: "someone asked the Messenger of God (PBUH) who recites Qur'ān more pleasantly? He answered: the

one who when you listen to his recitation, you see he is thrilling out of the fear of the glory of God". (Warram ibn Abi Firas, 1989: V. 1, p. 3)

Regarding inscription and calligraphy of Qur'ān, although the researcher could not find any Hadith except the one encouraging people to write "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" in beautiful handwriting, (Majlisi, 2016: V. 89, p. 38) this art is generally recommended in religious teachings. For example, it is said that "write beautifully, sine beautiful handwriting is a key to the Divine sustenance". (Mirdamad, 1893: p. 202) Imam Ali (AS) gave some advice about handwriting to his scribe, saying: "use *Liqeh*-[strings of natural silk used in the inkwell to prevent the ink from spilling and to control the amount of ink being removed by the pen]- in your inkwell, make the tip of your pen long, leave space between lines, write the letter close to each other. By observing these points, your handwriting will be much beautiful". (Seyyed Razi, 1993: p. 530) This Hadith evidently indicates Imam Ali's (AS) artistic spirit.

It follows from above that Islamic teachings directly emphasize artistic behavior towards Qur'ān. Using the context of art can lead to the guidance which Almighty God intended by sending the Prophets. In a narrative, it is quoted that Almighty God didn't send a prophet unless he had a pleasant voice. (Kuleinī, 1987: V. 2, p. 616)

b. Indirect Encouragement to Use Art in Qur'ān

Islamic teachings emphasize perfectionism not just in the recitation of Qur'ān, but in every good deed. Accordingly, it can be inferred that Islam emphasizes the use of art in Qur'ān. For example, Almighty God states in Qur'ān: "He, who created death and life that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct". (Qur'ān, 67:2) Once someone asked Imam Sadiq (AS) about this verse. He responded: "it doesn't mean to do more deeds, rather better deeds". (Kuleinī, 1987: V. 2, p. 16) The holy Prophet says: "God loves when someone does something, he does it well". (Payande, 2004: p. 801)

The word "*ihsan*" has been used a lot in the Islamic teachings. However, one of the meanings of this term has been neglected. It has mostly referred to as doing good deeds. For example, doing good deeds for one's parents means to meet their needs, to be kind to them, and to respect them. However, another precise meaning of "*ihsan*", which has been neglected, is to do well and in the right way. The fact that in some Hadith, the term 'doing perfectly' has been used instead of "*ihsan*" confirms this issue. For example, in the biography of the holy Prophet (PBUH), it is narrated that when Sa'd ibn Mu'adh passed away, the Prophet went into a grave to prepare it for his burial. He repeatedly said: "give me a stone, give me mud" until he filled all the gaps between the bricks and flattened the grave. Some of the companions got surprises at his trying to do it perfectly. The Prophet said: "I know the grave will soon be worn out and his body will decay, but God loves the servant who when doing something, does it perfectly". (Saduq, 1998: P. 385)

Moreover, in another narrative quoted from Imam Sadiq (As), the narrator asks about the meaning of "*ihsan*". Imam answers: "*ihsan* means when you do *Salat*, perform bowing down (*ruku'*) prostration (*sijdah*) well, and when you observe the fast, avoid whatever breaks your fast" (Barqi, 2005: V. 1, p. 255). Therefore, Muslims' duties and responsibilities regarding Qur'ān, such as recitation and inscription are no exception. According to the previous teachings, whoever recites Qur'ān, it is better to do it perfectly and recite it as pleasantly and beautifully as possible. The inscription, print, and publication of Qur'ān must also be done perfectly, or if it is published digitally, it must have the best quality.

B. Rational Analysis Based on Human Findings

In addition to the narrative analysis, there is another possible way to respond to the question "why should the man behave artistically with Qur'ān?" The man's intellect is one of the valid sources and Divine proofs. In Islamic teachings, it is said that Almighty God has given man two Divine proofs: internal and external proofs. *The Internal* proof is the man's intellect, and the *external* proof is the prophet sent by God to guide humanity. (Kuleinī, 1987: V. 1, p. 16) Anyway, the given question can be answered by referring to the intellect.

a. Mutual Behavior

When one sees an artwork, his enthusiasm and passion lead him to behave artistically. The most notable artistic behavior can be found in the spirit of worship. The Divine glory makes the mystic to prostrate. If he expresses pleasant behavior like prostration, which is the most beautiful worship, it is because of his knowledge of God and his considering God more beautiful than any beauty.

"You came out in a hundred thousand manifestations/so that I can see you with a hundred thousand eyes". (Forouqi Bastami, 1970: P. 147)

Or as Hafez says:

"From the bounty of the rose the true beloved the nightingale the holy traveler learned speech and if no, there had not been/ in his beak, all this sweet speech and song" Hafez, 1994: P. 375)

Based on Hafez's poem, it can be inferred that if someone makes artworks and serves Qur'ān, it is not his art, rather it the beauty of Qur'ān that has flourished his potential talent and virtuosity. If there was no Qur'ān, the man would never be able to create such masterpieces. In addition to Qur'ān, it can also be argued about other religious arts that art, whether architecture, sculpture, calligraphy, painting, or other visual arts, results from the man's love and affection for God, spirituality, and other sacred matters. If there was no religion, the man may have not been able to create artistic masterpieces. In other words, if the man didn't incline to spirituality, he wouldn't create these beautiful works.

b. Protective Aspect of the Art

The eternity of Qur'ān and Muhammad's being the *Seal of Prophecy* are two sides of the same coin. Islam as the last Divine religion provides a prosperous plan for the people of all eras, past present, and future. If Islam could be distorted, just like the previous religions such as Judaism and Christianity, then the guidance of Qur'ān for all times would not make any sense. Islam can be the Seal of religion only when it contains everything the man needs, and its content is protected from any change or distortion. The miracle of Qur'ān is that it is being protected. Since Qur'ān is an artistic book, its Divine eloquence and rhetoric are unique, and, thus, its human arts are unique as well. In fact, by the Divine will and Wisdom, man devotes his art to Qur'ān such that provides the ground for the protection of this Heavenly book since art is the best means by which eternity is achieved.

c. Love and Affection for God

Qur'ān has always been at the center of attention. Muslims recite some chapters of Qur'ān in their obligatory prayers. They also recite Qur'ān in different religious ceremonies and cultural events. They recite Qur'ān for the dead, and in the ceremonies held in commemoration of the dead. All these are because of their love and affection for Qur'ān. This love leads them to consider all the best for Qur'ān. Therefore, they don't tolerate any kind of desecration to the holy Qur'ān and try to protect it, even if it is

assumed that there are no verse and hadith regarding the protection of Qur'ān. These love and affection naturally lead to the creation of Qur'ān-centered arts.

Conclusion

Qur'ān and art are interrelated. On the one hand, Qur'ān is considered a miracle and an artwork due to its eloquence and rhetoric. It is sent by the All-Wise God to guide the man. On the other hand, the man loves art and beauty due to his beauty-loving and perfectionist nature. Qur'ān has been related to art since its revelation. The Qur'ānic arts are divided into the Divine arts and the human arts. The Divine arts relate to the aesthetic aspects of Qur'ān originating from God. Human arts refer to the man's behavior towards Qur'ān.

In this paper, the human arts of Qur'ān such as recitation, inscription, and illumination were studied from the ontological point of view, and their determining factors were explained. The results indicated that the Divine teachings encourage the man to exhibit artistic behavior towards Qur'ān. On the other hand, the rational findings confirmed such behavior. The most important factor affecting the man's artistic behavior towards Qur'ān is the beauty of Qur'ān. It is the beauty of the verses of Qur'ān that has led man to create such masterpieces throughout history. Moreover, the protective aspect of the art, as well as the Muslims' interest in Qur'ān also lead to the man's artistic behavior towards Qur'ān.

References

Qur'ān.

Barqi, A. B. M. (2005). *al-Mahasin*. Qom: Dar al-kitan al-Islamiyyah.

Bolkhari, H. (2011). *The ethical role of art in Cultural excellence*. Cultural strategy.

Bostani, F. (1997). *Abjadi Farhang*. Tehran: Islamic press.

Bostani, M. (1994). *Islam wa Honar*. [Islam and Art]. Mashhad: Astan-e-Qods Razavi.

Burckhardt, T. (1987). *Art of Islam, Language, and Meaning* (M. Rajab Nia, Trans.). Tehran: Soroush.

Burckhardt, T. (1991). *Sacred Art in East and West: Its Principles and Methods* (J. Sattari, Trans.). Tehran: Soroush.

Fayyūmī, A. B. M. (1993). *Al-Miṣbah al-Munīr* Qom: Dar al-Hijrah.

Forouqi Bastami, M. 'A. (1970). *Forouqi Bastami Diwan*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.

Grabar, O. (2006). *Art, Architecture, and Qur'ān* (H. Rezaei, Trans.). *Bi-Quarterly Journal of Islamic studies*.

Hafez, Sh. M. (1994). *Diwan-e-Qazaliat-e-Hafez*. Tehran: Safi Ali shah.

Hesam Pour, S. & Jabbareh, 'A. (2011). *A study of the melodic modes in recitations of some of the reciters of Qur'ān*. *Approaches to Qur'ān and Hadith sciences*.

Ibn Hisham, 'A. (nd.). *al-Sirah al-nabawiyah*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa.

- Kuleinī, M. I. Y. (1987). *Al-Kāfī* (4th Ed.). Tehran, Iran: Dār al-Kit āb al-Islāmīyya.
- Lings, M. (Ed.) (1999). *Splendours of Qur'an Calligraphy and Illumination* (M. Qayyumi, Trans.). Tehran: Garous.
- Mahdavi, M. J., & Imani, E. (2016). A comparative study of theories in explaining Islamic art. In selected papers presented in the first international congress on Islamic Humanities.
- Majlisi, M. B. (2016). *Bihar al-Anwar* (13th Ed.). Qom: Bustan-e-kitab.
- Ma'refat, M. H. (2002). *Qur'ān sciences*. Qom: al-Tamhid.
- Mayel Herawi, N. (1994). *Book design in Islamic civilization*. Mashhad: Astan Quds Razavi.
- Mirdamad, M. B. (1893). *al-Rawashih al-samawīyyah fi sharh al-hadith al-Imamiyyah*. Qom: Dar al-khilafah.
- Mo'in, M. (1996). *Farhang-e-Farsi*. [Persian dictionary]. Tehran: Amir-Kabir.
- Mojarrad Takestani, A. (2005). *Illumination method*. Tehran: Soroush.
- Nasr. S. H. (1997). *Islamic art and spirituality* (R. Qasemian, Trans.). Tehran: Hekmat.
- Payande, A. (2004). *Nahj Al-Fasahah*. Tehran: Donyaye Danesh.
- Rashad, A. K. (2016). *The nature of art and its relationship with nature and religion*. Qībsāt.
- Richard Ettinghausen, R., Grabar, O., & Jenkins, M. (2000). *Islamic art and architecture* (Y. Azhand, Trans.). Tehran: The Organization for Researching and Composing University textbooks in the Humanities. (1736). Foreword.
- Saduq, M. B. b. (1998). *al-Amali*. Tehran: Ketabchi.
- Seyyed Razi, M. B. H. (1993). *Nahjul-Bilaqah*. Qom: Hijrat.
- Sho'eiri, M. B. M. (nd.). *Jam' al-akhbar*. Najaf: Matba' al-heidariah.
- Tabarsi, F. B. H. (1994). *Majma' al-Bayan fi-Tafsir al-Qur'an*. Tehran: Nasir Khosraw.
- Tabarsi. A. B. 'A. (1983). *al-Ihtijaj*. Mashhad: Mortaḍa.
- Tabatabai, M. H. (2011). *Qur'ān in Islam*. Qom: Bustan-e-kitab
- Warram ibn Abi Firas, M. (1989). *Majmua't al-warram*. Qom: Maktab al-faqih.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).