Chapter 1

Towards a clear vision about Islamic Painting
CHAPTER – I

TOWARDS A CLEAR VISION ABOUT ISLAMIC PAINTING

Muslim artists have contributed to rich development of painting because they wanted to preserve and glorify their religion as well as their culture. Their paintings in general do not violate religious rules and restrictions. But they have distinct existence and everlasting traditions.

A. Islam : Faith and a Way of Life

To assess the richness of Islamic Art it is necessary to understand Islam as a living faith and a way of life. It will enable us to appreciate the value of expressions found in Islamic art. The story begins when Muhammad (PBH) was born in a noble Qureshi Family of Arabia in 569 AD Muslims believe that he is the last apostle and messenger of God sent to guide the humanity and propagate the doctrine of unity of God (MONOTHEISM) in the World. He declared that human beings should believe in one God and worship HIM only and that he was his messenger. His followers are called Muslims. They believe in Tauhid (Unity of God) and do not worship any one except Allah. At the age of 40 years Holy Quran (word of God) was revealed to Muhammad and he as a prophet taught this to the believers ‘Quran’ literally means ‘Recitation’. According to Muslims Holy Quran was revealed to Muhammad through an angel Gibrael in parts (Wahi). In Quran this angel has been referred to as Ruhulamin (spirit of Faith and Truth) and about itself, it states ‘These are the verses of Allah, we recite them to you (O Muhammad) in true form and surely you are one of the Messengers (of Allah).’
Besides Quran, the teachings, sayings and actions (SUNNAH) of Mohammad covering different aspects of life have been collected and codified by his followers and is known as Hadith. Quran and Hadith are the most important primary sources of Islam. The word Islam has been used by Allah in the Holy Quran as a distinct stipulation to convey Allah’s command that any other alternative name or religion is totally unacceptable to Him. The Quran states ‘Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam’.\(^2\) Literally Islam means total obedience or SUBMISSION.

Muslims all over the world follow their faith firmly and it has formed a common and distinct muslim culture. This unique and unbreakable unity is based upon the cardinal principles of Islam and is testified by Holy Quran in these words.

‘The believers are but one single brotherhood’. The Holy book provides clear guidelines for the believers. The Muslim faith is based on five principles called pillars of Islam,

Unity of God (Allah) or TAUHID and

Prophet hood of Muhammad (PBH) (Risalat)

Prayers (Salath)

Fasting (Ramzan)

Zakat (Charity)

Haj (Pilgrimage)

The basic premises\(^3\) of Islamic Faith is Monotheism and total renunciation of deities, idols, and all man made ways of worship. Allah alone is the Lord Creator, sustainer and destroyer of life. In Arabic Islam means
submission before the single entity of Allah. It is obligatory on all Muslims to accept and respect all prophets and messengers of Allah and their Books and believe that Muhammad is His last prophet.4

Islam tells about manifold powers and qualities of Allah, specially creation of universe, human beings, animals, trees, mountains and all worldly things. His blessings, mercy and control on everything. It prescribes a noble and comprehensive code of life based on equity, justice and brotherhood for its followers and lays great stress on tolerance and ways to lead a good social life.

Here are some extracts from Holy Quran highlighting these noble ideals.

'And your Allah (God) is one Allah (God – Allah) (La ilaha illa lillah) (there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He), the most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after is death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that have been scattered therein and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Ayat (Proofs, evidences, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.5

Holy Quran tells us that Allah is most merciful and compassionate and has created whole universe for man and there is no other god except HIM Human Beings are told repeatedly to repent on their misdeeds and sins and to purify themselves so that may could be blessed in this mortal life as well as in
hereafter (AKHIRAT). The Holy book prescribes and explains the duties owed by human beings to their Creator and their brother fellows.

Thus we can say that Islam means belief in unity of God and HIS attributes of glory, compassion and all pervading powers. Islam maintains that life has to be spent with care, balance and peace. The teaching of Tauhid and other moral values prescribed by Islam are amply reflected in various Islamic civilizations specially in activities of art and culture and spirit of Islam is fully visible.

B. Defining : Islamic Art

Art is mirror of a culture and forms its world view. The fine arts developed in Islamic world reflect its cultural values and explain Muslim viewpoint regarding Universe and spiritual realm Islamic art does not imply that it has been created by Muslims without any purpose. It displays spirit of elevation and fundamentals of divine law advocated by Islam and abides by its injunctions and regulation. It is neither a technique nor an outcome of some movement or philosophical thought. It denotes humane features of civilization and culture and stands for decency and restraint. According to Komaroff art has rendered specific services to Islam but at the same time it also developed secular art produced in lands under Islamic rule or influences, depending upon artist’s or the patron’s religious affiliations.

Before advent of Islam in Arabia only few arts flourished like poetry. But under Islamic rule contacts with other developed countries and their culture helped in the evolvement of a rich Islamic culture having several types of arts. These ‘Islamic arts emerged and developed along with the rise and advance of Islam.
These arts imbibed, assimilated and modified certain traditions and characteristics prevailing in the countries conquered by Islam. In the beginning the Muslims took interest in arts like architecture, calligraphy and literature. They provided some entertainment and offered good past time. There was a felt need for such deviation because in foreign lands Muslims came across with certain problems. Here it is worth while to quote some verses from Holy Quran and a Hadith of prophet Mohammad (PBH) endorsing the view that certain arts are inherent and permitted in Islam.

'We have adorned the near heavens with the stars (for beauty). And indeed, we have put the big stars in the heaven and we beautified them for the beholders.'

'God likes that whenever anyone of you perform any work, he should do it in a beautiful manner.'

'God is beautiful and likes beauty.' The idea is that Islam forms an integral part of every Muslim's life and therefore Islamic arts should be used to make every day life beautiful.

For Muslims truth begins with God and they believe that only Allah deserves their worship and devotion. According to Muslims everything is bound and dependent on His command and will. Only Allah creates and sustains His creation and everyone has to bow before His will and has to return to Him for ultimate reckoning and judgement. Therefore every Muslim has to maintain balance and harmony in all spheres of his life and try to avoid imbalances, contradictions and sins with the help of his meager knowledge and understanding.
Islamic art lays focus on spiritual representation and explains meaning of every object and action and is not confined to physical qualities only. A Muslim artist does not attempt to replicate or interfere with nature but tries to interpret and explain its meaning and versions. In this way he gets closer to Allah and persuades viewers to follow him. An Islamic artist is always deeply inspired by religious perception and regards art and culture with devotion.

It is a fact that Islamic artists showed more initiative and attention towards architecture specially in mosques and places of worship, palaces, markets, gardens, and other socially useful institutions. They also produced beautiful products in textile, metal works, pottery glassware, wooden and ivory carvings and book illuminations and calligraphy. We find excellent masterpieces showing great skill, enviable imagination, brilliant technique and excellent designs and colours. They illustrated beautifully all aspects of everyday life. They used mostly floral motifs and also drew in abstract style. These artists developed attractive designs of decoration such as winding stems, abstract leaves, blooming flowers and buds. Geometric patterns introduced remarkable sophistication in art. They denoted mystical significance and were used as high quality symbols.

A common feature of Islamic art is covering and designing of surface with exquisite geometrical figures and patterns. Use of Geometry to explain and unfold mysteries of nature helped the believers to uphold greatness of creator and the true meaning of life. In Islamic art these patterns explained physical, material and above all spiritual qualities of objects and blessings of nature. Introduction of flower and plant motifs, arabesque style and use of
Arabic letters made art of painting rich and within the reach of commoners. In
traditional Islamic world arts and crafts were beautifully integrated and
mingled with human life.\textsuperscript{15}

Muslims also believed that Allah was the one and only creator of
universe and human beings. They desisted from painting or drawing human
beings or any life like thing because it amounted to trespassing on Allah’s
position as the sole creator. Islamic theologians hold the view that artists who
depict pictures, paintings or drawings of any living being will be condemned to
hell fire. Generally muslims followed Islamic laws in their religious and public
life but in some private quarters these laws were not strictly obeyed. ‘Though
in Muslim world photography, statue making and making images of living
beings was prohibited yet in same countries some progressive or so called
liberal artists defied it under garb of creative art. They put forward an argument
that man being viceregent of Allah has been empowered to do so to fulfill his
inner creative urges.\textsuperscript{16} In their paintings they designed living models and tried
to symbolize their works.

‘However Islamic art is in favour of symbolic representation and does
not aim at portrayal of Supreme Reality in any form object or model as
prevalent in other reigns. Tauhid is the essence of Islam and as per this
principle of unity void is the only goal and soul of Islamic art.\textsuperscript{17}

Throughout the history of Islam its art has adopted various forms in
different parts of muslim world. Nasr suggests that ‘without the two factors or
sources of the Quran and the Prophetic brakah [blessing] there would be no
Islamic art’\textsuperscript{18}. He defines Islamic art as “the result of the manifestation of unity
upon the plane of multiplicity". Nasr has pointed to a clear connection between Islamic art and Islamic spirituality through the Divine Revelation.

The motive of Islamic art is to detect and depict beauty of smallest object and present it nicely. This is the inherent characteristic of Islamic culture that it emphasizes the use of balance and care in all these matters and at the same time covers all objects and impressions within these limits.

It may be concluded that Islamic art has decorated civilization beautifully with its balancing form.

C. Development of Islamic Painting

It has been clearly stated that Islam does not permit any figural art i.e. statue, picture or sketch of any living being. In accordance with this injunction we do not find any evidence of this artistic activity in the Arab countries situated in Muslim world since early centuries. But before the advent of Islam Arabs knew and appreciated this art because they practiced idolatry. The pre-Islamic artists displayed their artistic style and imagery in depiction of divinities, deities and idols and made figurative representation on rough stone blocks and they were commonly used as religious symbols. Sometimes they carved certain figures or sketches of deities which displayed impressive artistic representation in form of sculptures.

In seventh century Arab muslims came in contact with alien cultures possessing artistic traditions and features in countries like Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, North Africa and Spain. They found them attractive and interesting but could not accept or copy them because of teachings of Islam and their devotion to the path shown by the prophet. However decorative paintings and frescoes
found place in the buildings owned and constructed by affluent classes. In 8th century the courtyard of KAABA was decorated and designed with mosaic floors. Attractive artistic designs were introduced in mosques of Egypt and Syria. Actually at that time Muslim society was divided in two groups. One group was a bit liberal and patronized arts specially painting but the other which was in majority held staunch views and did not permit painting of living objects. It however encouraged and patronized architectural activities and Muslim artists displayed brilliant representation of their talents in this line. They made exclusive use of geometric designs and floral motifs. "In this period Christian artists also made great contribution in decorating buildings by displaying spiritual thoughts. Their paintings and wall decoration in churches were praised by all. They made beautiful paintings on bronze also." 

A new style of miniature painting quite distinct from bare excavated walls came into existence. "This type of painting on excavated walls not only decorated the buildings but also reflected the grandeur and aesthetic taste of the rulers. At the same time miniature painting translated text and stories of old legends and manuscripts into pleasant and novel visual expression of immense educational and recreational values. It illuminated beautifully Holy Quran and other books of general interest". There is no doubt that illumination and decoration of the sacred book made miniature painting very popular. "According to Muslim belief Quran was revealed to illuminate mankind and as such it needed external decoration and beautification also. Besides Quran other literary manuscripts and inscriptions were illuminated because of their educational value. Originally they were in Arabic but were subsequently translated into Persian, Turkish and other regional languages. In book
illumination line of Islamic paintings we find some Christian influences but it remained purely secular. Despite condemnation pronounced in Hadith about painting specially of living objects, it developed in latest Muslim period and made remarkable achievements in the field of fine arts'.

However in the process of development of arts non-Muslim figurative subjects crept in the art of painting. The muslim rulers liked all sorts of decorative subject matters in their buildings and household objects carved on ivory, ceramics, metals, textiles and carpets. Thus royal patronage in fields of painting and sculpture helped them to flourish extensively.

'The first visible process of Islamization of arts started during the reign of powerful Umayyad caliph Abdul Malik who made Arabic state language. He introduced coins which incorporated the words Bismillah along with the name of caliph and were decorated with traditional ornamental motifs'. In early Islamic rule (Ummayads) painting was limited to mosaic and fresco works in buildings only. This can be amply seen in the two famous buildings – 'The Dome of the Rock' and Jama Masjid of Damascus built jointly by caliph Abdul Malik and his son Waleed. Both these caliphs made rich contribution in development of arts'.

'The other fine example of frescoe painting is seen in 'Qasar ul Umra' a palace of an Ummayad ruler. The figures of Arabs and non Arabs, of white and black origins have been depicted there. The most important iconographical marks inscribed in Arabic and Creek languages identify them as kings of Spain, Abyssinnia, Persia and Turkish rulers. At that time two important types of Christian churches 'Nestorian' and 'Jacobites' flourished and a number of
artists were engaged to decorate them. As at that time Arab artists possessed quite meagre traditions hence it is quite possible that frescoe paintings of Qasar ul Umra were copied from designs of Nestorian or Jacobite church artists.

'Persia (Modern Iran) had its distinct artistic traditions since old times and developed them. It had cultural contacts with Buddhism in Central Asia before the advent of Islam. When Arabs came into contact with these cultures they were influenced by them and Islamic arts were also affected.'

'In thirteenth century some painters made beautiful illustrations in manuscripts of 'Kalila wa Damna' and 'Maqamat ul Hariri'. They were adopted and developed by other Muslim painters. These illustrations and decorative designs had some Christian influences also. The style of Maqamat ul Hariri resembled considerably with the features of service books used in Nestorian and Jacobite churches. Since these churches were located in Muslim countries. their artistic designs were probably liked and patronized by their rulers.

'Some artists painted scenes around Makkah like Hira etc. but orthodox Muslims raised their voices against this sort of pictures. But still muslim artists continued with such exercises.'

Manichaen religion is closely connected with pictorial paintings similar to designs and patterns used in Persian paintings. It played important role in development of this art in central Asia and Persia. Here mention is to be made of famous collection of pictures composed by famous artist Mani. There are frequent references to the Persian literature and history in them. It led to development of painting art in Muslim world. Fresco paintings and figures
are found in Ummayad palaces 'Qasar ul Hyrat al Gharbi in Syria and in the
ruins of Abbasid city of Samarra. The scenes and figures depicted in these
paintings showed Hellenistic, Persian and Turkish characteristics. In Algharbi
Palace abstract floral design probably of Melleristic origin with abstract tendril
shoots derived from Sasanian art appear in the Hashiya (Border'). This design
suits perfectly to the spirit of Islamic faith. The combination of these designs
with geometric patterns and occasional entwining with Arabic letters
(arabesque) at later stage made very rich contribution to the history and
development of art of paintings. This Islamic style was used as a special
iconography in architecture paintings, sculpture and other allied arts and
became quite common.

However Islamic paintings remained confined to illumination and
painting of manuscripts till the end of eighth century. The influence of Persian
paintings starts with the manuscripts of the Abbasid period. Abbasid or
Mesopotamian school is the name given to the whole bulk of illuminated
manuscripts produced while the Abbasid caliphs reigned in their luxurious
capital at Baghdad. The Abbasid Caliphs generously patronized all branches
of knowledge and got thousands of books from other literatures translated into
Arabic. Probably they followed very zealously the command of prophet
Mohammad 'Go to China to seek knowledge'. These translations covered
subjects of physical sciences, medicine, agriculture, mathematics, astronomy,
philosophy and literature'.

To some extent Muslim paintings were also influenced by Chinese
painting which was admired and copied by Persian artists. We find special
mention of Chinese art in early Persian literature. 'Nizami the famous Persian poet has narrated comparison of characteristics of rival schools of painting. In Nizami’s ‘Makhzan al-Asrar’ and ‘Khusrou and Shirin’ composed in form of Khamsahs or QUINS (five verses) there are illuminated introductory pages which are highly ornate and beautiful. The floral and geometrical designs and gold lettering of poetic verses are excellent. According to Dr. Valentiver: 'These miniature paintings with a single brush by an artist is not only example of great refinement, but shows vitality and entertaining variety. Some of the designs show Chinese influences of the fourteenth century. The colours appear at first profuse and appealing in their vividness, but a closer study reveals them to be a nice expression of the artist's temperament and their brilliant ideas and imagination.' The classical period of Islamic painting began after contacts with Persian culture and different types of people, Mangols, Turks, Arabs following nomadic, pastoral and urban traits. Painters and artists were influenced by different civilizations and religions like Buddhism, manichaenism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity and their outlook became more liberal and wide. After embracing Islam they formed themselves into a strong community and continued with their art. The existence and prevalence of cosmopolitan culture brought about new awakening in the spheres of architecture, inscriptions and decoration. In Arab paintings architecture occupies a symbolic place only but in Persian art it appears more powerful and impressive in the form of domes and minarets which testify to great Islamic architectural achievements. 'Persian painting left tremendous impact on contemporary pictorial art of India and Ottoman Turkey. The sultans and Mughal kings of India welcomed the Persian way of life and accepted its
cultural dominance. Mughal painting reached its zenith mainly because of individual portrait drawings within a Hashiya of floral and arabesques designs. They were the main symbols of Islamic decorative art.\textsuperscript{35}

Thus Islamic paintings were influenced by Christian, Sasanian, Manichance and Chinese schools of Art. After rise of Islam Arabs came in contact with new cultures and were influenced by their development. Many artists of pictorial art continued their profession after embracing Islam. No doubt muslims made very rich contributions in the field of architecture. The decorative art in which Muslim artists used geometry and astronomy in making new patterns gave inspiring and naval messages in the buildings constructed in that period. Muslim artists used geometric patterns in a symbolic way to explain and preserve various intellectual cultural and philosophical traits. But in their endeavours they paid more attention to pictorial art and carved a new path for themselves. They formed their painting schools which contained new concepts of arts, culture and architecture but followed spirit of Islam.

D. Subject Matter in Islamic Painting

After development of pectoral Art, a number of new subjects based on new ideas were undertaken and painting was not confined to few particular or traditional themes only. In earlier days paintings concentrated on palaces of nobles. But later on they took up new ideas and designs and no doubt it proved very useful for historical and cultural studies. Earlier only translation and copying contributed to exchange of ideas and cultural contacts between the ruler and his subjects. But now artists depicted and explained the social conditions, traditions and cultural traits more vividly. ‘During muslim period
paintings on the walls depicted hunters, kings and other allegorical figures and beautiful places. Before Islamic paintings period painting of nude figures of males and females derived from Hellenistic prototypes was quite common. Figures of plump women reflected the Arab ideal of female beauty coupled by obscene verses composed by *lahili* (Pre-Islamic) Poets. With the development of Muslim painting, painting of natural scenes was introduced in palaces of in Samarra and Baghdad. This was due to predominance of Mesopotamian influence. It showed audience in decorated chambers in palaces known as Javsaqal Kharqani of Abbasid caliph Al-Mutasim. The subject matter of the painting revolved round two dancing girls whose faces were devoid of make up and their dazzling garments were markedly accentuated fold. Their figures were almost frontally posed.

In earlier days artist's works in form of illustrations were found in manuscripts only and contained historical materials only. But Muslim painters in their manuscripts gave detailed discussions on scientific subjects and useful topics such as medicine, astronomy and mechanics. Since that was age of translation, in Baghdad hundreds of Greek manuscripts mostly treatises on medicine were translated like Book of Antidotes. It was interesting to note that magical astrological and hermetic dialogues and scenes went hand in hand in study of science, philosophy and other branches of knowledge. Some translations dealt with preparation of medicines, their use, cultivation of herbs, and gave detailed account of physicians, chemists and agricultural labourers and respect was shown to physicians. Qazwini's prose work containing pictures was a treatise on cosmology in different languages. Subjects like
natural science of Astronomy, Physics, Zoology, and geology were discussed in it.\textsuperscript{43}

Kitab ul Ajaib ul Makhluqat (The book of wonderful creations) was also composed by Qazwini and in it some miniatures were included for artistic reasons to depict certain creatures described in the book. Imaginary treemen or men having multiple heads or people living in distant and unknown islands were painted. They were not personal fancies of any artist but was simple faithful illustration of tales narrated in the text.\textsuperscript{44}

Jaziri’s treatise on Automatics included a water clock and showed remarkable state of knowledge in 13\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{45} Aristotle exercised considerable influence on Muslim philosophy, science and Theology. Muslim thinkers like Al Kindi, Farabi in the east and Ibn-Tufail and his disciple in Spain\textsuperscript{46} represented views of Aristotle on nature, Psychology, physiology and Ethics. They were included in various encyclopedias and were in common circulation. The book of animals composed by Aljahiz had recourse to history of Aristotle translated by IBN al Batriq\textsuperscript{47} The book called Kalila-wa-Damma was composed under Christian influence but was later revised and edited by Muslim scholars and contained some specimen of Muslim art. Since the book relates to stories of animals only the artists also confined themselves to the animals.\textsuperscript{48}

Another important book is Maqamat or Assemblies written by Hariri a great scholar known for its precise style and nice expressions.\textsuperscript{49} The book has a satirical approach and has been written in a lucid style. Its hero Abuzayd Al Saruji travels to various regions and faces strange and diverse situations e.g. he
meets a half naked old man who always talks in verse\textsuperscript{50}. The book gives an account of social life and social systems of many countries with stories told in fluent language giving interesting details. It occupies an important position in Arab literature.

Muslims have always shown keen interest in history. In accordance with spirit of Quran they loved and liked to know about Prophets and kings of earlier days in conformity with their religion and literature. Artists also try to preserve their history through their works e.g. Firdausi the famous Persian poet has composed Shahnama and paid tributes to old Persian kings for their chivalry and marvellous achievements. It has been illuminated by fine illustrations by artists and these illustrated copies of Shahnama are readily available\textsuperscript{51}. In an illustration Bahram is shown killing Iskander. The illustrations of Shahnama made by Baysunghur Mirza deserve special mention because of its beautiful background decorated with nice geometrical pattern. Besides Shahnama, Khamsas or Quinters of poet Nizami are excellent specimens of Persian literature.\textsuperscript{52}

In a manuscript of Shanama discovered during Safavid period there is an illustration in which Sohrab enquires his mother about his father Rustom. It is decorated with a heavy but beautiful pattern.\textsuperscript{53} Some artists have shown certain religious events through pictorial art despite the fact that religious divines condemned it. This is a case of artist’s self expression which defied the verdict of clergymen.

Another artist Rashid ul din depicted on illustration called ‘Muslim embassy’ in which it has been shown that Muslim embassy arranges for
extradition of certain converts from Islam. The theme of another illustration made by him is about a Prophet who doubted about Almighty's power to restore the glory of Jerusalem after its destruction. As a result he along with his donkey was kept in state of death for one hundred years and then put to life again.

In Twelfth century in a manuscript of Khamsa (Quintent) composed by mystic poet Nizami there is an illustration showing Prophet MUHAMMAD'S journey over to heavens (MERAJ).

Persian culture had rich varieties of literature and artistic activities and in addition it borrowed and adopted many artistic styles from other cultures. Romance is a popular and interesting subject in Persian Painting. Two famous romantic paintings are well known (i) The HAFT Paykar (Seven Portraits) and (ii) Khusro and Shirin. A manuscript of Khamsa-e-Nizami found during Timurid period shows a painting in which Khusro is carrying a bunch of flowers to Shirin's palace. The buildings of the painting is well decorated by floral and geometrical patterns. Nizami has thus provided good material for other painters to illustrate in pictures. Another eminent Persian Poet Shaikh SAADI's books "Gulistan" and "Bostan", have been extensively illustrated by many artists. Romantic and fairy tales are quite common in later Persian and Indian literature and they have given ample opportunity to the artists to produce interesting and erotic illustrations like Laila Majnoon. Islamic poetry from Abu-Nawas onwards has been full of love songs and lyrics addressed to their beloveds. It was a wide spread fashion in those times followed by cultured youth. Abul Faraj al-Isfahani's "Kitabul Aghani" or Book of Songs presents a
number of mounted figures in which great attention has been paid to textile patterns and the book has become very decorative and monumental. Albairuni was a great geographer of Muslim world and has written a chronology of Ancient people. In a miniature illustration of this book a scene of temptation between the first male and female of the world has been shown.62

Muslim artists discharged their duties well by depicting historical events and social activities of their times through their paintings and rendered great service to their culture. It goes to their credit that they did not lose sight of the spirit of Islam during the performance of their duty. Their work on religious themes in SPAIN was though for a short spell yet it got appreciation from people. The main characteristic of Muslim artists was their decorative approach based on geometry and architecture. The beautiful backgrounds and attractive patterns have given them a dignified identity of their own in the field of fine arts.
REFERENCES

2. Surah Al-Imran 3: 19
7. Surah As Saffat 37: 6, para 23.
10. Ibid.
11. Elisabeth Siddiqui, *An Introduction to Islamic Art* http://www
12. Hasain Zarah http://www.zarahhussain.co.uk
15. Hussain Zarah, op.cit.
16. Tetzer A. Scott, op.cit.
18. Ibid., p. 7.
19. Ibid., p. 7.

22. Ibid., pp. 18-20.


35. Ibid.

39. Ibid., pp. 42-46.
40. Ibid., p. 90.
41. David, op.cit., p. 103.
42. Ibid., p. 141.
43. Alexander, op.cit., p. 93.
44. Ibid.
45. David, op.cit., p. 35.
46. Alexander, op.cit., p. 43.
47. Ibid.
49. David, op.cit., p. 106.
50. Ibid., pp. 106-7.
51. Ibid., p. 218.
52. Ibid., pp. 218-19.
54. David, op.cit., p. 177.
55. Ibid.
56. Robinson, op.cit., Figure 531.
57. Alexander, op.cit., Figure 148.
