AXIOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND POSTULATES OF ISLAM.

(a) Islamic Theory of Morality.

(b) Aesthetics in Islam.
ISLAMIC THEORY OF MORALITY.

The search for the ultimate good has always been considered an interesting and primary problem of morality. Some say that the attainment of pleasure is the ultimate end for man as well as society. This view is not a new one. Aristippus of Cyrene, a disciple of Socrates, took pleasure as the highest good. Eudoxus also propounded a theory that creatures, rational or irrational, are striving for the attainment of pleasure, but his view was sharply criticised by Aristotle. After him it was Epicurus who rejected goodness except that it was for pleasure. He claimed that both gods and men required pleasure. Later on Epicurean philosophy developed and Lucretius, the Roman poet, gave it literary touches and made it attractive, but the thing which appears to be significant is its alienation with the preachings of Christianity. Among modern philosophers Hobbes was its supporter while Locke was its bitter critic. He declared that human conduct should be moulded on the foundation of God's command. Pleasure as an ultimate goodness also appears in the philosophical thought of Jeremy Bentham though utility also has got an important place in it.

Like pleasure perfection too is considered the supreme good and ultimate end of human endeavour. The conception of perfection is clearly evident in the two Indian strands of philosophy namely Hinduism and Buddhism. According to Hindu philosophy Moksha is the ultimate good of life and can be achieved through liberation from the mortal, when a man liberates himself from the finite and loses himself in God, he attains Moksha. Here perfection is achieved after losing himself into perfect being, i.e. God. The Buddhist philosophy terms Nirvana to the final goal of life in which two things Dukkha (suffering) and the cessation of Dukkha are of prime importance. Nirvana occurs when the root of Dukkha is eradicated. This perfection lies in Nirvana.

Emanuel Kant in his great work "Critique of Practical Reason" propounded the theory of categorical imperatives and observed the fact that duty for the sake of duty is the ultimate good and this should be adopted as the only standard of morality.

Now it is a matter of investigation as to what is the ultimate good that Islam determines. It does not take pleasure, perfection and duty for the sake of duty as the ultimate goal of life. Here the conception of Nirvana and Moksha are not found.

3. Ibid., p. 702.
Islam lays the foundation of its moral system upon the belief that man has been created by God and the ultimate good is to win His pleasure. But how can this pleasure be secured? The Quran declares that to call man to God is the supreme virtue. This calling in the form of good counsel indicates that whatever he is presenting before others is not his own personal thought; it is rather the directive of the Almighty. This is also evident from his dealings where there is no difference between his thoughts and practice. Thoughts are enforced by practices. In this way when a man completely surrenders himself to the will of God he becomes able to achieve His pleasure. Such a man is deemed fit to destroy evil and to establish good. Evil cannot be equated with good, for there is no comparison between the two. But the Quran instructs believers to replace the evil by good because this is the way to convert the enemy into friend. This instruction was given in a situation in which the believers were badly treated and tortured by the pagans of Mecca. Here it has been disclosed that virtue or goodness appeals to human nature. When good manners are adopted in response to misbehaviour it becomes too difficult for an evil-doer to continue his

5. Ham Mim: 33
7. Ham Mim: 34.
Believers in that stage of Meccan period had not any materials resources to confront the pagans. In such a situation the instruction to repel evil by goodness seems very appropriate. But the succeeding verse of the Quran confirms that goodness is not an easy thing to be practiced. The moral standard fixed in the proceeding verse can be obtained by only those persons who have the quality of patience and of self-restraint.

Ultimate goodness determined by Islam demands that the believers act up to high principles maintaining justice. They are also urged to be "the standard bearers of justice and stand witness for the sake of Allah." It is evident from the text that Quran does not simply direct to do justice in personal behaviour only but also to bear a standard of justice with a view to eliminate injustice and oppression. The Quran demands of Muslim to become illustrations of justice. The sole aim of conduct is to please Allah and this is why man has been commanded to maintain justice even it goes against one's own interest or one's parents or relatives. At the same time it has also been ordered not to follow unjust desires for this causes the displeasure of Allah. It is also evident from the following verse of the Quran:

9. Ham Mim: 35
10. Nisa: 135
11. Ibid.
that what pleases God is not only the performance of some formal, stereotype, religious rituals but we also find here in explanatory statement about the nature of virtue:

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West: but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the scripture and the prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing."

The above quoted verse deals with the method of achieving God’s pleasure. This method encompasses individual as well as social life and covers every aspect of life. It seems that in Islam, the total behaviour of a man is regulated by the will of Allah. Such a person is helped by God in the midst of severe dangers and adverse situations—situations in which there is apparently no hope of security and safety. The Quran says that it was in such a situation that the poor believers of Mecca were aided by the hidden hand of God. It (the Quran) depicts

the situation of the Meccan period in which believers were few in number, powerless and afraid of the barbarious majority of pagans, but soon Allah provided them refuge at Madina. Now they were satisfied with their lives. This security and prosperity, was no doubt, according to the Quran, as blessing of God with a view to make believers grateful. And this gratefulness was expected not to be acknowledged only but it must be expressed in obedience to Allah and His Messenger. They were urged to promote the mission of the prophet in the face of hardships and difficulties. Such a gratefulness was regarded unreliable in which though kindness of the Master was acknowledged but no practical measures are adopted to please Him. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that achieving God's pleasure is possible only through submission. Man is by birth God's servant and he has no right to offend Him. At another place the Quran declares that at the time of the creation of Adam the whole of mankind recognized Allah as their Master and creator and also made a covenant that by way of seeking His pleasure they would act according to His orders. Thus according to Islam the ultimate good is to fulfill the will of Allah.

13. Anfal: 25
15. Araf: 146
The other most important question of moral philosophy is to find out the means for knowing good from the evil and the way to distinguish the right from the wrong. Different philosophies of life have its different answers. Rationalists say that it is 'reason' which must be applied as a means to distinguish good from evil. But rationalism in the religious context is entirely anti-religious theory, rather an anti-religious movement. Having utilitarian approach it advanced scientific arguments to criticise religious beliefs. A.B. Benn discloses this, when he defines Rationalism, "means the hostile criticism of theological dogma, mental habit of using reason for the destruction of religious beliefs". J.B. Bury feels that it is the unchallengeable right of reason to deal with the whole of human thought and also in the field of religion, where it is generally opposed.

Empiricism takes this problem in another way. Its followers claim that scientific investigation is the only way of judging the good and the evil, and during this investigation sense-experience is the most reliable source to apprehend universal laws. Supporters of this view believe that it is possible to fail in the apprehension of a particular phenomena but there is no possibility of making error or false thinking.

19. Ibid.
except due to the neglect of the observer. As the case of failure is concerned it is due to not adopting the right method of observation. It is admitted that the inconceivable matter is not the subject of Empiricism.

Intuitionism gives the same place to intuition what Empiricism gives to senses and rationalism to reason. Intuition, according to this theory, provides knowledge in the result of direct and immediate apprehension of truth. It does not give proper place to reason and intellect and declares that wisdom lies in intuition. At a cursory glance this philosophy seems akin to the religious dogma but when we go through the modern explanation of this theory we find that it is near to cognition. Hereditary character is not realised as the first cause of emerging intuitional wisdom, but it primarily depends upon education and training given to the subject. It is also accepted that wisdom lies in instinct. In the behaviour of animals wisdom is expressed, this is why they learn to meet every new situation and become able to adjust to it. No doubt this wisdom is the result of intuition and not the product of cognition. Intuition also acts as the most powerful factor in the process of invention and discovery. Every discovery and invention is credited to the clear consciousness rooted in high efficiency.

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20. Ibid., p. 294.
and confidence over the subject concerned\textsuperscript{23}. Moreover, the problem is not a simple one, scholars are unable even to reject or to accept intuitionism as epistemology\textsuperscript{24}.

Now we proceed to inquire about the standard set by Islam to distinguish good from evil and to investigate the means and sources of knowledge. The \textit{Quran} asks the believers to be God-fearing, this quality creates an insight to distinguish good from evil. This insight as described in the \textit{Quran}, is the real criterion\textsuperscript{25} and consists in following the way of life approved by God. This criterion serves as a torch-bearer in the journey of life of a Muslim and makes him able to differentiate goodness from evil\textsuperscript{26}. Holding that pure and impure are not equal the \textit{Quran} introduces a standard of value. It gives priority to quality against quantity. The value of one hundred rupees is no doubt greater than that of five rupees, but when one hundred is earned through unlawful means and five by lawful, the valuation of five becomes greater because five is pure and hundred is impure\textsuperscript{27}.

How can man achieve goodness and save himself from the evil this has been clearly stated in the story of Adam and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 7, p. 400.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Jonathan Harrison, The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, vol. 3, p. 72.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Anfal: 29
\item \textsuperscript{26} Cf. Mawdudi, Tafhim, vol. II, p. 140.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Maida: 100, cf. Mawdudi, Tafhim, vol. I, p.
\end{itemize}
Eve. While they were dwelling in paradise, God forbade them to eat the fruit of one particular tree. Satan (the devil) posed himself as their true well-wisher and disclosed a quite new fact to them that once they tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree they would be converted into Angels or into immortals. But when they disobeyed their Lord and fell prey to the devil they became naked before each other and began to cover their private parts by the leaves of the tree. Seeing this result of disobedience they repented and asked for mercy. It can be concluded from this story that according to Islam shame is an innate quality in human beings. It seems from the sources, that the instinct of shame is not the product of cultural refinement because the sources confirm that the first man of the world was endowed with this instinct. This is also proved that while, on the one hand, man has been gifted with such a fine quality he, at the same time suffers from the weakness of sex instinct. This is why the devil tried to expose their private parts. It is also evident from this story that man does not accept a direct invitation of wickedness, so the devil played the part of a well-wisher. Thus, it becomes clear that man is deceived by evil-doers in the name of sincerity. One thing which is quite apparent is that man desires to become an angel or to be converted into an immortal.

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28. Ar'araf: 19-23
being. Falling prey to such evil desires, he loses his high status. This also discloses that whenever man adopts disobedience he loses his modesty and shame. Islam differentiates good from evil in a way that the result of God's obedience is modesty and shame while that of disobedience is nakedness and shamelessness. It was not the inherent quality of the fruit tasted by Adam and Eve which made them naked, but the real cause lied in their disobedience. As long as they remained obedient, God maintaining their modesty and when they gave up the way of obedience, that very moment, God withdrew the garment of mercy and made them naked.

It is found in the Quran at different places that goodness lies in God's obedience while evil is the result of setting aside His orders and following carnal desires. Men, possessing two opposite characters cannot be equal. Quran declares that one is on a clear path following God's instructions while the other makes judgement of right and wrong on the basis of his own desires. Such a man accepts evil as good, for it appears alluring to him. The case of such a man is hopeless. Prophetic guidance would not be profitable for him at all, because he deliberately rejects truth, and worships his own desires as God. For such a person there is no

31. and Muwaddi, Tahfimul Quran, vol. 5, p. 22.
33. Ibid.
guidance, the Quran says Allah has sealed his heart and hearing from accepting Divine Guidance, he has been deprived of vision to see the reality because of his rebellion against God.\(^{33}\)

How shall God blame the disbelievers when He Himself made them astray? The commentators of the Quran says that it is not the will of Allah to deprive mankind of the freedom of choice and option. He does not want to interfere with man's freedom of action and in his discretion. If He so intended He could have made every person obedient and there would have been no need to send the Messengers with these Books of Guidance.\(^{34}\)

It is the scheme of Allah to give opportunity to every individual and community, to choose their way of action either by accepting the directives or by rejecting them. There is no compulsion from Him\(^{35}\). This is the Islamic explanation of the differences of opinion among the members of the society. The Quran discloses that these differences which led disputes, conflict and struggle among mankind, would be settled in the hereafter. But at the same place the believers have been directed not to adopt immoral practices to eradicate the evil, as was the case of the Arabian Jews who legalised their mal-practices against pagans saying there is no moral obligation on us with regard to the pagan Arab.

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and we are rightly entitled to practise dishonesty and deceit that might be advantageous to us and harmful to the disbelievers. There is also evidence to suggest that knowing Allah's religion as right, one has no right to destroy the opposite religion, for this is against the will of Allah if He had so willed He could have created only believers. Allah is not in need of the so-called champions of Islam. Thus, it is concluded that Islam wants to repel evil and foster goodness.

In moral philosophy two same problems are considered of prime importance. Firstly there is the question of sanction behind the moral laws and secondly that of the motive behind all moral conduct. Different philosophies have discussed this question in their own way. As far as Islam is concerned it takes help in solving these two problems from its two basic beliefs i.e., Tawheed (the unity of God) and Akhirah (Faith in the life hereafter and accountability).

There are a number of information in the primary source in this regard. Only two verses of the Quran are quoted here:

"Those who expect not the meeting with us desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of our revelations, their home will be the Fire because of what they used to earn."

37. Ibid.,
38. Yunus: 7-8, Eng. tr. by Pickthale.
The above statement seems argumentative, the claim is that he who rejects the faith in the hereafter will have to face the hell, and on this claim, argument has been given that after the rejection of this belief man becomes irresponsible because he does not consider himself accountable to God. This feeling of freedom opens the ways for immorality and the final aim of a man having such a view becomes to obtain worldly pleasure and to fulfil his biological demands. In the course of fulfilling his desires he breaks all prohibitory orders of God and legalises every evil, and this will lead him to hell\textsuperscript{39}.

Commentators of the Holy Quran feel that every materialistic and atheistic philosophy is based on utilitarianism which does not possess a sound and stable foundation for morality. The concepts of eternal and universal moral values do not appear in the behaviour of an utilitarian. His values change according to the situation. Good and evil, honesty and dishonesty, justice and injustice all depend upon transitory situations. Some practices are considered evil within the bounds of a nation but these practices are not only legal but are desirable in the larger interest of humanity. Goodness is realised goodness as long as it is in the interest of a person, family or society. But when it goes against society it turns into evil. The motivating and controlling power of Islamic morality differs from that of the

materialistic philosophies. It is observed that accountability to God in the hereafter is the controlling. force for human conduct in the Islamic moral theory. The fear of Jahannam (perdition) prevents a man from performing evil deeds. On the Day of Judgement, according to the Islamic belief when the whole of mankind will be collected before, Allah, everyone would see the reward and punishment of his acts and no one will bear the burden of another. This makes every individual responsible for his own acts, no one would share his burden. This personal responsibility and individual accountability to God compels him to take part, even in collective action, very carefully. Because it is believed that this action would be analysed in such a manner that the reward and punishment to a man will be according to his association and participation in the work. In this situation there seems no justification to plead the case in such a manner that evil was adopted at the instance of some other great personality.

After recording a dialogue in the hereafter in which different generations blame each other for their faults the Qur'an enjoins us of the judgement of Allah there is double chastisement for everyone.

40. Ibid.
41. Bani Israil: 15
43. Aaraf: 36-39
The judgement to give double punishment for single crime looks unjustified. Hadith literature also support this view of the Quran to some extent and explains the nature of the problem. It is quoted that the Prophet pronounced, "The one who initiates, an innovation, that is disapproved by Allah and His messenger, shall be held responsible for the sin of all those people who followed his innovation, without lessening in the least the burden of the sin committed by the inventor." 44 At another place he says, "whenever a man is killed unjustly anywhere in the world, a part of the guilt of the murder is debited against the account of that son of Adam who was the first to murder his own brother, because he was the first to open the gate of murder." 45 These teaching reveal the reality of "double punishment". It appears convincing that when any evil practice is initiated, it bring forth far-reaching influences. Different people and institutions are affected by it, they are also affected by the influence of this evil practice. So it appears justified that some blame for it must be shared by the inventor of the evil likewise. The case of the heritage of goodness is treated in the same way as of the one who initiates any good work and gets its reward as long as it influences human society. This is why Quran pronounces again and again that Allah will give Ajr-i-Azim (the great reward) to the righteous

45. Ibid.
46. Anfal: 28 Taubah: 22, Bani Israil: 9
persons.

It is argued in support of the hereafter that justice can not be maintained in this worldly life because virtue as well as vice is initiated by a person or organisation which influence mankind for a long period, sometimes for centuries, reason, therefore, demands that there must be another world where complete retribution may be possible. The question as to how it is possible to punish a man in this world, who initiated a world war, for example, is very thought provoking. The concept of accountability to God is both the controlling and motivating force of morality. Besides, the fear of punishment in the hereafter there is one more a significant controlling power. In the chapter Hud, it has been clearly stated that when a community becomes corrupt as a whole and no voice of righteousness is heard in it to promote good and eradicate evil, the people of such a community prove themselves to be confirmed criminals, and when the situation is such the whole community is destroyed completely. According to the Quran, this is the practice of Allah. And in order to avoid this consequent the community nurture a group of righteous persons that may take up the responsibility of promoting good and eradicating evil.

It is proved from the above study that the Islamic

48. V.V. 116–117.
49. Ibid.
theory morality is deeply rooted in its fundamental belief. It brings a change in human conduct. If it is accepted one pays his attention to the promises and warnings of God known through His prophet and His books. Thus, it appears that the morality produced by Islam is directly related to the inner feelings of man. It does not seem a thing imposed from outside. This inner feeling becomes the basis of relationship between man and God, between man and his fellowmen, as well as the whole external world. Moral obligations are of two categories, positive and negative. The positive, in addition to the belief in the oneness of God and its practical demands for the individual and social life, includes Salat (Prayer), Zakat (the poor-tax) Saum (fasting in the month of Ramzan) and Hajj (the pilgrimage of Mecca). The negative or preventive ones include keeping away from indecency in behaviour like gambling, intoxication, sexual relation without wedlock etc. It is believed that these prohibitions have been introduced in the interest of mankind, because Allah is the creator of mankind. He properly knows the nature and needs of mankind and accordingly these rules of conduct have been framed by Him. Morality in Islam appears to surpass religious rites and encompasses the entire gamut of social problems, with God's pleasure as the ultimate end and accountability to Him in the hereafter as necessary warning.

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AESTHETICS IN ISLAM.

A. Islamic Theory of Beauty.

1. Definition of Beauty.
2. Is beauty objective or subjective?

B. Islamic Theory of Art.

I. Four Principles of Art creation.

1. Takhleeq
2. Taswiya
3. Tadil
4. Tarkeeb-e-Sowari.

II. Six Stages of Man's evolution.
Aesthetics, in a broad sense, is the study of beauty. Beauty is opposite of ugliness, hence this discipline may include the study of ugliness also, for the purpose of distinguishing beauty and determining its value. But specifically the subject matter of aesthetics is the beauty apparent in an art. Under aesthetics the philosophy, the psychology and the sociology of arts are discussed and scientific criticism is made to determine the value of a piece of art.

The ancient philosopher's like Plato's Aristotle's and Plotinus' contribution to this field of knowledge is admirable but the term aesthetic was first used by a German Philosopher Alexander Gottlib Baumgarten (1735). Before Baumgarten Leibniz had made a distinction between confused knowledge and distinct knowledge. According to Leibniz the knowledge acquired by the intellect is distinct from the knowledge acquired by the senses. Baumgarten gave the name aesthetics to sensuous knowledge. This was soon recognized as a separate branch of knowledge having two major aspects. One aspect dealing with the theory of beauty and the other dealing with the theory of art. Art is considered objective while beauty is considered subjective. For our own purpose i.e. for having an idea of the Islamic theory of aesthetics, we will initiate here separate discussions on these.

two aspects of the discipline. Such an endeavour to frame a theory of Islamic aesthetics would be of some importance particularly when the scholars accept the gravity of the magnificent art created under the Islamic system of thought. It is accepted "Islam may be regarded both as religion ... and as a way of life which has shown itself capable of absorbing and reconciling the peoples of most diverse origins. The cultural unity fostered by Islam necessarily embraces the sphere of artistic creation. Drawing heavily on the creative forces of the conquered countries, Islamic art, in time, produced from various sources a new whole whose origins are not immediately evident. 3

Islamic Theory of Beauty.

1. **Definition of Beauty:**

In Islam beauty is Divine attribute. The Quran says "the most beautiful names belong to God so call Him by them". 4 For beauty is a divine attribute, hence man, the creation of God, also reflects this Godly attribute in his person. The Quran affirms that God created man in a very beautiful mould 5. And not only man but whatever He has created is beautiful 6. Why He created everything beautiful? The answer lies in a statement of the Prophet. It is related that the Prophet pronounced that God, being

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4. A'raf: 180. Also see Bani 'trail: 110 and Ta-Ha: 8
5. Tii: 4
beautiful, loves beauty. In Islam God is considered the absolute reality and thus all things other than Him are naturally relative and indebted to the Absolute Reality for their life and their existence. Whatever beauty is found in the Nature, in the human bodies and minds, in the surroundings and the society, is attributable to Him. The source of every beauty is absolute Divine beauty. The Quran points out the very fact when it says:

* God is the light of the heavens and of the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass was as it were, a brilliant star lit from a blessed Tree, an olive, neither of the East nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarcely touched it: Light upon Light: God doth guide whom He will to His Light.*

In the above quoted verse the Quran uses word Nur (Light) which is opposite of the word Zulmat (darkness). The Quran has also used the word Zulmat for falsehood and waywardness. Thus it becomes evident that the word Nur refers Absolute Beauty. Human mind cannot perceive beauty in its Absolute Form but takes pleasure from relative beauty. This beauty creates tender and noble

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9. Bagara: 257
emotions in the human being. It gratifies human senses and gives
delight and peace. Beauty is simply defined as whatever pleases
the ear and the eyes. The definition of beauty given by St. Thomas
Aquinas is still considered one of the best. According to him
beauty is "id quod visum placet," that, which when seen pleases. 11
Such a definition of beauty is also confirmed by the Quran. The
Quran also says that when a man beholds a beautiful thing its
colour brings soroor (pleasure) to him. This Quranic definition
of beauty is apparently older but similar to that of Aquinas. 12

At another place the Quran says: "And the cattle hath
He created, whence ye have warm clothing and other uses and
whereof ye eat, and wherein is beauty for you, when ye bring them
home, and when ye take them out to pasture." 13 In these verses
the Quran depicts the pleasant sight of meadows wherein cattle
walk freely. The beholder of this scenery finds in it what the
Quran calls jamal 14 (Beauty) and which attracts and pleases him.
According to Islam the eternal place of bliss is Jannah (Paradise)
about which the Quran says: "Now no person knows what delights of
the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them for their (good)
deeds." 15 Here Quran uses the idiom Qurratu Ayenin (delights of
eye) which gives the meaning of a beautiful thing that endows the

14. Ibid.
the most pleasant experience and the fullest satisfaction to its beholder\textsuperscript{16}. The Quran also discusses the worldly things which attract man and which look pleasant. But the underlying meaning of such a discussion is that these worldly things are not actually beautiful. Their superficial beauty prevents man from gaining the most beautiful thing which God possesses. The Quran says: 

Beautified for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and offsprings, and the stored-up heaps of Gold and silver, and horses branded (with their marks) and cattle and crops. These are the enjoyments of life of this world.\textsuperscript{17} After the description of these worldly comforts and pleasures the Quran soon gives its judgement that the most beautiful place is in the possession of God. The Quran calls it Husnul Maab (the beautiful abode)\textsuperscript{18} and this is for the righteous persons, and a place where they would bower all the things that they desire. This will be given to them as the reward for their good deeds (Husn-i-Amal) which they performed in their worldly life. The Quran, in the following words, depicts the pleasant and blissful life of the Garden (Paradise), the pious and the righteous will


\textsuperscript{17} Al-i-Imran: 14, Eng.tr. by Marmaduke Pickthaih (with a little change).

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
lead there:"(They will be) on Thrones encrusted with gold and precious stones, reclining of them, facing each other. Round about them will be young of perpetual freshness, with goblets, (shining) breakers, and cups filled out of clear-flowing fountains: No after-ache will they receive therefrom, nor will they suffer intoxication: and with fruits, any they select; the flesh of fowls, whatever they might desire. And there will be companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes, - like pearls well-guarded... No nonsense will they hear therein, nor any taint of ill, - only tidings of blessing and well come."19 Thus, it is evident from the above quoted references that beauty (husn or jamal) and pleasure (soroor) are the two aspects of one and the same reality. And both are interconnected and interdependent. We also find in this context a clear description in the Quran where God promises His righteous servants a blissful life of Jannah (Paradise). The Quran says"(He) will shed over them a light of Beauty and a blissful joy".20 Here beauty and joy have been used together for Jannah (Paradise). All these show that where there is beauty it naturally gives pleasure. It gives satisfaction to the senses and bliss to the heart. Thus only those pieces of art are considered beautiful which give satisfaction of senses and gratification to the heart.


The Quran uses beauty in a very dynamic sense. According to it beauty is not a static reality. Accepting God as the absolute beauty it says "Everyday in (new) splendour doth He (shine)." The beauty of God, according to the Quran, can not be perceived through human eyes. He is also considered the best of creators (ahsanul Khalegeen) hence through His beautiful creations He expresses His splendour. The Quran relates about this dynamic aspect of beauty. When we observe this world we find two diverse forces here, one: the force of attraction and other, the force of absorption or gravitation. The Quranic statement that God has made all things in pairs indicates this fact. In human life, in animal life and also in vegetable life, sex difference is quite apparent. Apart from matter even in the field of energy this type of differences is there. Forces which are known as positive and negative like electricity look like pairs and complements to each other. In this pair system while one feels attraction the other craves for absorption. The two diverse forces jointly create gratification and pleasure. Addressing human beings, the Quran points out to this very fact as follows: "He created for you mates from among yourselves, that

22. Ar-Raf: 143.
23. Muminun: 14
2. **Is beauty objective or subjective?** The Islamic approach:

In aesthetics, the discussion whether beauty is objective or subjective is very controversial. Objectivists say that beauty exists in the object while the subjectivists claim that beauty exists in the subject. These two diverse schools of thoughts are further divided into various offshoots contradicting each other. Among objectivists, some claim that everything in this world is beautiful whereas denying it some others say that both beautiful and ugly things exist in this world. Those who claim that all things of the world are beautiful argue that the things which at the first sight appear ugly are actually beautiful because of their good stature and structure. The equilibrium and balance found in them make them beautiful and attractive. There are some who believe that the whole universe is dark and ugly but it looks beautiful and pleasant because it is the place of manifestation of the Absolute Beauty. The relation between the Absolute Beauty and the beauty manifested in worldly things is like the relation existing between sun and the moon. Moon itself is not lustrous but shines through the reflected rays of the sun. This is known as Neo-Platonism.

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Subjectivists believe that objects are neither beautiful nor ugly. The beauty one feels in them is actually the expression of the emotions and the desires of the observer. Hence beauty is not something external but it is a subjective quality of man which makes the object beautiful. An urdu poet depicts the fact as follows:

سیئم ترم پاکہ کے دیدار کیاں سے اس کے نہ بھی جنگ ہوں گاں ناں بھی جلد

Some modern psychologists explain beauty in quite a different manner. They say that the forces of attraction and absorption are in operation in the world. These also work in everyday life. The attraction every living being feels in its opposite gender is called sex instinct. The psychologists of the said school of thought say that the sex instinct is the source of beauty and pleasure.

As far as Islamic approach is concerned, we, in this regard, find two types of verses in the Quran. One type indicates that beauty is objective while the other shows that beauty is subjective. First we would collect and analyse the verses which indicate that beauty is objective. The Quran says, "It is not lawful for thee (to marry more) women after this, nor to change them for (other)wives, even though their beauty attracts thee." 27

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This verse shows that beautiful women attract men by their beauty. According to this verse beauty is objective. At another place the Quran says "He has created the heavens and the earth in just proportion and given you shape, and made your shapes beautiful." This verse makes it clear that the beauty of the heavens and the earth and what are in between these is due to the just proportion and the balance maintained in their creation. Man is also considered a beautiful creation because he has been shaped by God and the limbs and the organs he possesses have been made in proportion. This harmony and balance makes him beautiful. We can imagine a man whose limbs and organs are not in harmony with each other. Take the example of a face wherein the nose, mouth, eyes and ears are in proportion with each other. If any of these organs becomes smaller or bigger in size compared to the size of the face it would certainly turn into ugliness. Thus objects are beautiful because they are proportionate. The following two verses also indicate the same reality: "And earth we have spread out (like a carpet) set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance," and "who hath created, and, further given order and proportion."

Let us consider the verses suggestive of the subjectivity of beauty. The Quran says "It is He who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding."\(^{31}\) This verse uses the word _afeda_ meaning hearts and also describes the functions of two important sense organs, the eyes and the ears. When this verse is analysed in the light of the general principle that have been mentioned that every creation of God is beautiful, we certainly come to the conclusion that man's heart and sense also would necessarily be beautiful. The beauty of heart and the beauty of sense make the external world pleasant and attractive to the observer. Thus, the verse under study suggests that beauty is subjective. Moreover, the Quran also declares that man has been created on the pattern of God\(^{32}\) and that beauty is one of the divine attributes. This also means that human nature is beautiful. Hence it appears that beauty is subjective.

A cursory glance of the above quoted verses would suggest that the Quran has got contradictory statements on the topic under discussion about the subjectivity and objectivity of beauty. But actually it is not so. The Quran deals with both the aspects of beauty. And actually beauty is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. It is something in between.

\(^{32}\) _Rum_ 30.
If it is purely objective, why it is that the same object looks sometime ugly and at others beautiful. Sometimes it looks lovable and at others the same object look repulsive and despisable. Sometimes it creates sympathy and at a different time it causes repulsion. If beauty were purely subjective or purely an internal quality or an emotion of man, why did we need a media to represent it. It appears therefore that beauty finds expression when the subject and object are in contact with each other. The aesthetic experience is neither the pure impression of an object nor it is a pure impulse of a subject but come, into being from a synthesis of both. For the object the quality of harmony is essential and for the subject dynamic equilibrium of impulses are required. In such a state unity of both would create an aesthetic experience. This may be called the theory of the unity of beauty. The Quran presents the theory when it says: "He who has made everything which He has created Most God: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay, and made His progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised; but He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave him (the faculties) of hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding)." These verses show that beauty exists in the object as well as in the subject. It appears from the external structure of the object and also exists in the internal quality of the subject. According

to the above quoted verses of the Quran man's structure, fashioned in due proportion, is an spectacle of objective beauty. And God's spirit breathed in human being represents subjective beauty. Beauty expresses itself because of the unity of these two.

The Islamic Theory of Art:

Beauty, to express itself, needs some form or object. Art is the medium in which beauty finds an expression. This is why an artist deliberately tries to make his art beautiful and attractive. People appreciate only those works of arts which are beautiful and please them. Thus art and beauty are very close to each other. This view of art is also apparent in the Quran. It discusses the various creations of God and declares that the things He has created are beautiful. Every creation is beautiful and attractive and hence the Quran introduce Him as the best of artists (Ahsanul Khalegeen).

Now we will try to find out the important characteristics considered essential for art. To appreciate these characteristics as we go through the sources we find therein the description of paradise, the extraordinary art of the Creator Artist. This is an eternal abode of bliss for those righteous and pious persons who performed praiseworthy deeds (Husn-i-Amal) in their worldly life. Time and again the Quran describes the joyful

34. Sajda: 7, Nahl: 5, 6, 8.
life of paradise. This means that art should be pleasant and attractive. The second characteristic of an art, as it appears from the Quran is that art should be the outcome of the artist's will. God created all things out of His will or volition. Whenever He intends to create something He commands it to be. The work of art which comes into being out of the power of His will cannot be purposeless. This is why God says that whatever He created in the heavens and in the earth are not idle sport but are these with purpose. The works of art, according to Islam, should have an end behind it and it should never be treated as pastime. If something is created with the help of machine such creation would not be considered an art. The Quran says that God created His supreme art— the first man of this world from His own hands. Then He created his mate and from the pair, spread on earth countless men and women. These men and women are pleasant in their appearances. The Quran says: "And (He) has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful. Why these men and women look beautiful. What are the techniques of creativity behind this. Let us try to explore it. The Quran says: "O man what has seduced thee from thy Lord, the Most Beneficient from Him who created thee, fashioned thee in due proportion, and gave thee a just bias; in whatever Form He wills does He put thee together."
Four Principles of creation of Art:

These verses of the Quran determine four principles of Islamic aesthetics. These are at work on the biological plane in the creation of man. These find application also in the art which is claimed to be Islamic. In the original Arabic text four words have been used to indicate four principles of artistic creation. These principles are actually the four gradual stages in the process of creation of art. They are: Takhleeque, Taswiya, Tadil and Tarkeeb-e-Sowari. Let us discuss them separately.

**Takhleeque:** In the above quoted reference Quran does not use this word in the sense of complete creation, as it is generally understood. If it was so the other stages of creation like taswiya, tadil and tarkeeb-e-sowari would have not been discussed after it. This shows that takhleeque does not mean here complete creation. But it is the starting point of the creative activity which may be termed as sketching or making a form in which the art develops and passes through the various stages of perfection. This view is also supported by other statements of the Quran. Let us see the following three verses: "And we have adorned the lowest heaven with lamp."
We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars.  

See ye not how God created seven heavens one above the other, and made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp. These verses deal with the decoration of heaven. Human observation makes it clear that heaven or sky is a formless dimension. Sun, moon and stars make up its existence and beautify it. Like the heaven earth is also a speck which has been adorned by mountains, rivers and trees etc. Thus, it is confirmed that the first stage of creation is making a sketch and the Quran terms this stage of creation as takhleeq.

Taswiya:- This is the second stage of creation. At this stage things are made harmonious so that they may look beautiful. At one place the Quran discusses taswiya as follows: "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I am about to create man from clay; when I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of my spirit fall ye down in obeisance to him.

These verses show that the art of God when passes through the stage of taswiya becomes able to nourish the spirit of God. Taswiya has also been discussed at another place in the sense of harmonization. All these show that taswiya or harmonization of various elements into a complete whole makes art beautiful.

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48. Sad: 71-72
49. Sajda: 7-92
Tadil: This is the third stage of God's creativity. This means to maintain balance and proportion in the various elements of creation. Tadil produces rhythm (in poetry) and tone in painting and makes art beautiful. This technique makes the Quran itself a piece of most beautiful and perfect literature.

Tarkeeb-e-Sowari: The last stage of creativity discussed in the verses understudy is shaping. At this stage artist is free to give a finish to his art. Beauty is not restricted in any particular shape. The artist chooses the shape and designs his art according to his imagination and conception.

The art which passes through the above mentioned four stages would certainly be beautiful but what make it a living thing is the penetration of the artist's spirit in his art. At this point, art and artist become one. Artist is recognised through his art and art is identified with the artist. The penetration of the artist's spirit in his art is evident from the following verses of the Holy Quran.

"Behold thy Lord said to the Angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from and moulded into shape; when I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of my spirit, fall ye down in obeisance to him."

50. Mujeebur Rahman, op. cit. p. 29.
52. Hijri: 28-29
Six stages of Man's Evolution:

we have one more important information in the sources regarding the creative processes employed by God. Like the foregoing these processes are also directly related to biological creation and the various stages of evolution. God creates living being through these stages. But they apply to every category of artistic creation. This is evident from the Quran when it address God as the best of creators (Ahsanul Khalegeen)\textsuperscript{53}. This also suggests that artist, in his creation, should apply these techniques because these have been enunciated by the best of creators. Let us study the said information. The Quran says: "Man we did create from a quintessence (of clay); then we placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot we made a (foetus) lumps; then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then from it we brought forth another creature; so blessed be God, the Best of creator.\textsuperscript{54}

In these verses six stages of man's biological creation have been discussed. They are:

1. the stage of Nutfa or the sper
2. the stage of Alga or the clot of congealed blood.

\textsuperscript{53} Mumihun 14

\textsuperscript{54} Muminun: 12-14.
3. the stage of Mudhgha or foetus lump.
4. the stage of Aizama or skeleton of bones.
5. the stage of Lahma or clothing the bones with flesh.
6. the stage of Takhleque-i-Akhir or another creation.

In art, idea or imagination plays the same role that Nutfa (sperm) plays in the biological creation of man. Different ideas and imaginations come into the mind of the artist but all are not developed into the form of art. Only those are expressed in the artistic form which catch the artists' imagination. The sperm which rests in Qarar-i-makeen passes through the above mentioned stages and gradually develops and gets maturity and finally appears in proportionate limbs and organs. To this Quran says takhleque-i-Akhir (another creation). What has been termed as takhleque-i-Awuwal (the first creation) in the Quran is also very significant from the point of view of artistic creation. Let us see the following verses from the different chapters of the Quran:

**Behold thy Lord said to the Angels:** I am about to create man, from sounding clay of mud moulded into shape. **Behold, thy Lord said to the Angels:** I am

55. Ibid.
56. Muminun: 14
57. Hijri 28.
about to create man from clay,\textsuperscript{58} and "He created from sounding clay like that used in pottery."\textsuperscript{59}

These references show that before the creation of man in his complete form the matter needed for man's creation was quite clear to God. It suggests that form of art and the matter of artistic creation must be in the knowledge of the artist before he starts to create some work of art.

The present study shows that Islam has its own theory of beauty and art. Islamic aesthetics is deeply rooted in the belief that God Himself is Beautiful and whatever He creates is beautiful. Beauty according to the Quran, brings \textit{Soroor} (the pleasant experience) to its beholder. It gives satisfaction to the senses and joy to the heart. Only those works of art are considered beautiful which gratify the senses and are blissful. According to Islam beauty is neither objective nor subjective. It appears in the external structure of the object as well as in the internal quality of the subject. Art should be beautiful, and purposeful \textit{Takhleeque, Taswiya, Tadil} and \textit{Tarkeeb-i-Sowari} are considered the four stages in the process of artistic creation.

\textsuperscript{58} Sadi: 71
\textsuperscript{59} Rahman: 14.