



Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences

ISSN (E) 2708-4175 ISSN (P) 2074-2061

Volume 44 Issue 3 September 2024

Journal homepage: <https://pjss.bzu.edu.pk>

Journey of Calligraphic Evolution in the Glorification of Verses of Quran

^a Maria Ansari, ^b Farjad Faiz, ^c Aisha Shoukat

^a Assistant Professor, University College of Art and Design, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Email: maria.ansari@iub.edu.pk

^b Lecturer, University College of Art and Design, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Email: farjad.faiz@iub.edu.pk

^c Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Email: aisha.shoukat@iub.edu.pk

ARTICLE DETAILS

History:

Accepted 05 August 2024

Available Online 23 August 2024

Keywords:

Quran, Calligraphy, Muslim Art, Glorify

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The research will focus on the traditional and contemporary trends in calligraphy visually capture the essence of the Islamic art. Calligraphy for Muslims is a visible expression of the highest art of all, the art of the spiritual world. Calligraphy has arguably become the most venerated form of Islamic art because it provides a link between the languages of the Muslims with the religion of Islam.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Qualitative content analysis method was used in this study to analyze.

Findings: This shows that calligraphy which use in writing Quran and see around us and in old thing is developed by the Mughals in the sub-Continent of India. Mughals gave growth and promote Islamic Calligraphy in India mainly by practicing by own selves or bringing the artisans from all over the Islamic world especially Persia.

Implications/Originality/Value: So it is concluded that contemporary Calligraphy also celebrates art for its own sake, where the verses of Quran or holy words are may become unclear but they arranged beautifully and attractively.



© 2024 The authors. Published by PJSS, BZU. This is an open access research paper under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

Recommended Citation:

Ansari, M, Faiz, F. & Shoukat, A. (2024). Journey of Calligraphic Evolution in the Glorification of Verses of Quran, *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 44(3), 431-441. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13365287

Corresponding Author's email address: maria.ansari@iub.edu.pk

1. Introduction

Calligraphy visually captures the essence of the Islamic art. Calligraphy for Muslims is a visible expression of the highest art of all, the art of the spiritual world. Calligraphy has arguably become the most venerated form of Islamic art because it provides a link between the languages of the Muslims with the religion of Islam. Its historical evidences traces back with Persian invaders and later it was compiled by Mughal Emperors. Some of their finest expressions have been showed in this paper, which shows the base of calligraphic contribution to glorify verses of Quran. Different style of writing left the strong impression on the static sustainability of artisans as well as that open the new horizon for upcoming calligraphy.

After the reveal of Quran, the calligraphy is considered to be the essence of Islamic art and always take a precious place among the Muslims. The traditional way of calligraphy gives us the immense importance in the Islamic

countries. Different style of writing left the strong impression on the static sustainability of artisans as well as that open new horizon for the upcoming calligraphy. Folk arts are identifying on some technical bases, and the calligraphers also take over the technical realizations in art world in the end of 20th century. The cultural history of many Islamic countries is also based on the development of contemporary techniques of that era. Ferraro, C. (n.d.)(2014)

Calligraphy is the art or skill of writing letters in order to communicate a message by meanings of the words. In the beginning of 1700 B.C, man knew the only alphabet related from the North Semitic, which developed in Syria and Palestine. It was based on twenty-two consonant letters. The alphabets from Arabic language were also created on this model. After that, nearly 1000 B.C., later vowels added by the Greeks and Greek in turn became the classical example for Etruscan (800 B.C.), whence the letters of the early Roman alphabet came from, and eventually all letters belong from western languages. Elliot, M. (2004)

2. Islamic World

In Arab language Islam means "submission" and originates from a word "peace," the elaborated meanings of that is submitting to Allah's Will that man gain peace in both lives, in this world and the hereafter. Islam delivered the message for the whole word and it's revealed in the holy book, names Quran, through the Prophet Muhammad, and shares with the other Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Christianity, the teachings of all the prophets is belief in the One and only Allah. Islam is not only a religion it is also teaches us the way of leading life.

Islamic calligraphy has developed in conjunction with believes on one Allah and the language of Arabs. In place of it is created on Arabic alphabets, it is called "Arabic calligraphy". Although the word "Islamic calligraphy" is a more suitable word as it includes all calligraphic work done by the Muslim calligraphers.

Islamic calligraphy is related to linear Islamic art, also called "arabesque" for the decoration of the ceiling and the walls of the mosques as well as on the pages of Holy book Quran. Elliot, M. (2004)

In the expansion of Arabic language, Qur'an plays a significant part, and by extension, stylized writing of the alphabet in Arabic Language. Still Islamic calligraphy is the main source of proverbs and passages from the Qur'an. Martin, R. C. (2003)

Mostly, it is believed that during the time period Ottoman, Islamic calligraphy excelled.

2.1 Persia

The historian discovered that the Old Persian writing style was developed in approximately 600–500 BC. Such type of calligraphy may be written in vertical, horizontal, and diagonal sharp edges letters, because of that, the given name is "script of nails/cuneiform script" (*khat-e-mikhi*) in Persian. Later, other writing styles like "Pahlavi" and "Avestan" scripts were used in early times in Iran.

Even though historical background was filled with many sources from Arab countries and numerous calligraphic styles in reference to the cities names in which they were practiced, they mostly divided into two general groups with certain some variations; these groups are the dry and moist style of calligraphy of Quran. The dry style was considered to be the early predecessors of squarish and geometric Kufic, and the moist styles represented the early predecessors of the decorative cursive scripts. Ferraro, C. (n.d.)(2014)

2.2 Antiquity

The history of calligraphy has deep-rooted as the history of Islam and Muslim scholars is exploring on Calligraphy from "*Khat-e-Koofi*" named after the Iraqi town of Muslims learning *Kufah*, it is the created arrangement of "*Khat-e-Moakli*". In fourth (4th) century, *Ibn-e-Maqla* "Imam-e-fun" has worked on the Islamic ways of writing,

after the deep concepts of learning he invented 06 new creative styles of writing which are the following:

“*Khatt-e-Suls*”

“*Khatt-e-Muhaqqa*”

“*Khatt-e-Toqfe*”

“*Khatt-e-Naskh*”

“*Khatt-e-Rihan*”

“*Khatt-e-Riquaa*”

After a long historical period, from these six writing styles, “*Suls*” & “*Naskh*” familiarized regularly for daily practice because of their strict principles ethics. By the time, collaboration of “*Khatt-e-Riquaa*” & “*Khatt-e-Toqee*” a different writing style developed and called “*Khatt-e-Taaliq*” further established in the form of “*Khatt-e-Nasta’aliq*”. It’s the most ancient Islamic style of writing is known the final decision of Islamic calligraphy. According to historians, Mir Ali Tabrazy, was the creator of this style of writing. The essence of this writing style was harmony and articulate charm, that it unable to remember all former styles from history. Munir. A, Arshad. S. and Bukhari. W.N. (2021)

Then Mughal Emperor zaheer-ud-din Babar contributed a new writing style “*Khatt-e-Babri*”, but it was famous only during the Baber’s era. “*Deewani*” style was also become famous in the time of Mughal emperor Akbar (The Great). Many Mughal leading figures of that period adapted this writing style with interest.

Earlier, most of the production in Calligraphy was compiled in “*Khatt-e-Nasta’aliq*”. The master of calligraphy, Mir Punja Delhvi also worked on “*Nasta’aliq*”. Abdul Majeed Raqm and Tajud-Din Zareen-Raqm, the two famous Muslim Calligraphers also developed the calligraphy in stylize form and they predicted the Values of “*Khatt-e-Nasta’aliq*”. *Anjuman-e-Khush navis*. (2010)

2.3 Instrumental Media

The traditional tool for calligrapher is the *Kalam*, It is a kind of writing instrument made up of bamboo sticks; the inks are usually in different colors, and chosen such that its strength can contrast greatly, so that the larger strokes of the compositions can be very energetic and vibrant in their outcome.

Islamic calligraphy used an extensive variety of ornamental modes other than paper, such as slabs, pots, carpets, and inscriptions. Papyrus and parchment used for writing, previously the arrival of paper. The arrival of paper transformed the art of calligraphy. Bhutta, M. I. (n.d.)(2014)

Calligraphy is also written on coins. Generally, the verses of Quran were also appeared in coins.

3. Styles of Writing Quran in different Eras

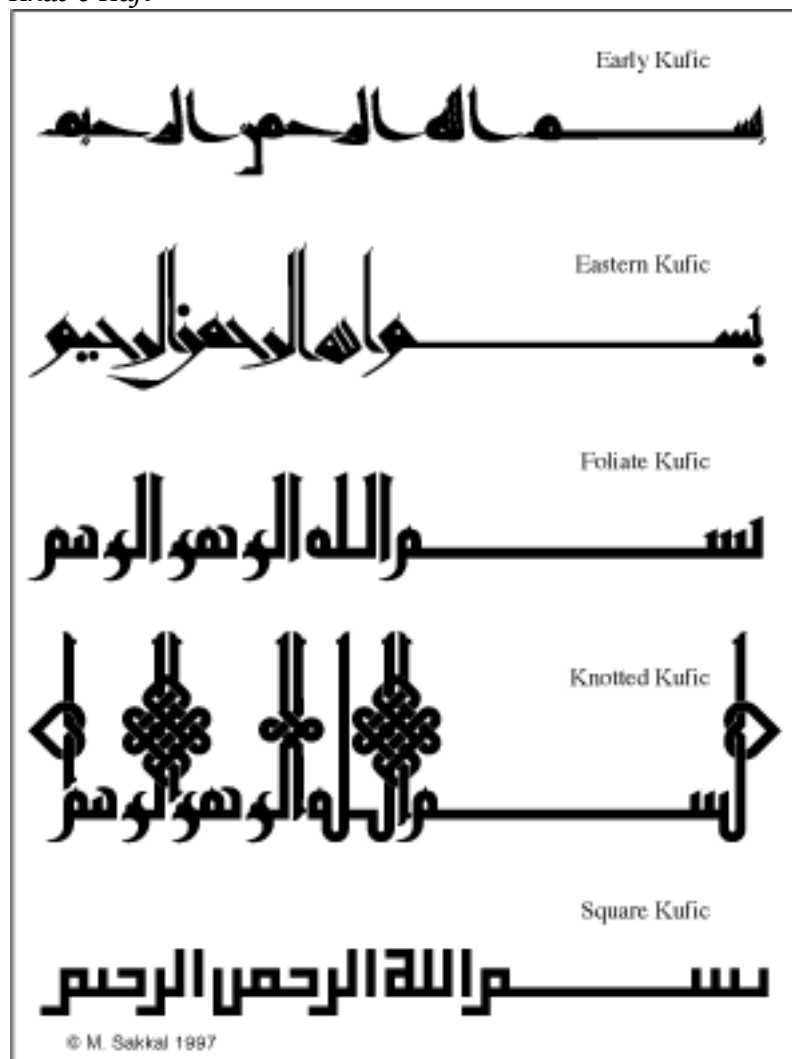
3.1 The Kufic Script

Kufah is the well-known city of Iraq and established in 641 A.D. and in its development time there was the modification of the Arabic script into a sophisticated and uniform script, It is known as *Kufic or Kufi*. The square and angular lines were combined in this writing style and squeezed bold curvical forms. **Kufic** is considered to be the oldest writing style and involved in reformed of the old Nabataean script. From the 8th to 10th centuries this script was predominant in manuscripts. This Arabic writing style was suitable for stone carving, found in the most primitive surviving Quran manuscripts, the first Quran, the holy book of Muslims was written in this script. In this script, sometimes the diacritical marks over the letters are in red color and the use of golden color for decorations the surahs of Quran dissimilarity attractively with the heavy black writing. The Kufic script had no set rules; the only communal article is the linear and angular forms of the letters. For this reason, application methods of this script have various styles in different regions and countries as well as it has its own individuality. It’s also written in many other ways, in the manuscripts, the form of the scripts is very squarish and for decorative purpose rigid forms were used. In Seljuk dynasty Kufic script is usually seen on coins especially in early Ottoman coins and on exterior beauty of monuments, a more decorative flowing writing style, *Naskhi*,

established. These styles were often seen for contrast in constructed buildings and decorative frameworks on two-dimensional forms. As shown in Figure 1

Figure 1

Khat-e-Kufi



3.2 Square or geometric Kufic

The rectangular and simplified writing style is geometric or squarish Kufic writing. It is still frequently used for tiling on Islamic architectural buildings. In Persia occasionally the complete buildings are enclosed with tiles spelling holy names like ninety nine names of Allah (The one God), His messenger Hazrat Muhammad Mat peace be upon him and Hazrat Ali Murtaza and other sacred personalities from Islam, in squarish angular Kufic, this technique known as banna'

Figure 2

Naskh Script



3.3 The Naskh Script

In 10th century Naskh, referred to word "copying" and it's consider in art and design in Turkey in early 16th

century. After that it was approved for writing the verses of holy Quran. *Naskh* is clearly understandable and modified as favorite type of contemporary writing style. It is written in a small form with thin lines and round shaped. Museum, M. P. (n.d.)(2014)

لَا تَنْظُرُوا نَسْخَ لِكُمْ خَارِفَةً لِلْعِبَادَةِ بَلِ انْتَهَزَ الْفُرْصَةَ الْعَادِيَةَ وَاجْعَلْهَا عَظِيمَةً

Cursive style lettering is already existed in *kufic* form, that's why in the initial stages of its development they lacked improvement and stylishness, curvical writing styles were generally practiced for informal writing. As Islam spread, innovative writing style was required for communicate with others, and a clear cursive writhing called **naskh**. In the beginning, it was appeared in the 10th century. This writing style has most ubiquitous among other styles, used in Qur'ans writing, certified orders or announcements, and private communication. It turns out to be the foundation of modern Arabic writing style. As shown in Figure 2

Figure 3

Khat-e-Naskh



Variation of the naskh includes the following:

3.4 The Thuluth Script

To decorate particular scriptural objects, *Thuluth* is developed as a display script. This script is written in long vertical lines with wide spacing. The *Thuluth*, name orientated to the x-height, which is one third of the word 'Alif.

Thuluth alphabets handwriting was started from the medieval Islamic style. One-third of each letter slopes is the basis writing principle of *Thuluth*. It is a huge and gracefully stylish, in medieval time period cursive script used on mosques and holy places decorations. It was used to write surah headings, religious captions, generous captions and epigraphs. In 13th century, this script was also used for the production of large numbers of copies of holy book of Muslims. As shown in Figure 3

اَوْ سَادَةً انْعَمَ مِنْ صِدْقِ لَامِرٍ وَلَا مَرَدَّةَ اِجْمَاعٍ مِنْ تَعْرِفِهَا

Figure 04

Khat-e-Thulth



3.5 The Riq'a Script

The calligraphic style of handwriting *Riq'ah* derived from *naskh* and *thuluth*, it was found in the middle of 9th century. The shape of alphabet is modest with small strokes and slight embellished. *Riq'a* style was simple and used in everyday writing. It is also very stress-free to learn and very famous for understanding both languages Turkish and Arabic. As shown in Figure 4

Figure 5

Khat-e-Riqqa

هَبِيرٌ لِلْمَرْدَانِ يَمُوتُ فِي بَيْلِ فَاكِرَةٍ مِنْ اَنْ يَعْبَسَ طَوْلَ الدَّهْرِ جَبَانًا عَنِ نَصْرَةِ وَطَنِهِ



3.6 The Muhaqqaq Script

Muhaqqaq considered the magnificent style of writing used by old masters of calligraphy. It was one of the most attractive and eye catching scripts, its execution were also one of the most the challenging. Museum, M. P. (n.d.)(2014) In the *mamluk* era this script was generally used to write Quran and official works, from the 18th

century onwards the use become largely restricted to short phrases, like Allah's name or *Basmallah*. As shown in Figure 5

Figure 6

Khat-e-Muhaqqaq



3.7 The *Diwani* Script

In early 16th to 17th centuries, During the reign of Ottoman Turks, the *Diwani* script developed. It is a cursive style of writing. The inventor of this script was Housam Roumi and reached the highest rank of admiration under Suleyman-I dynasty (1520-66). This style is embellished and communicative ; *Diwani* was renowned for the involvedness of the line within the cervical letters and the close connection between the alphabets and the words. As shown in Figure 6

Figure 7

Khat-e-Deewani



In the difference of *Diwani* script, *Diwani Al Jali*, is characterized by its great quantity of dactical and decorative marks.

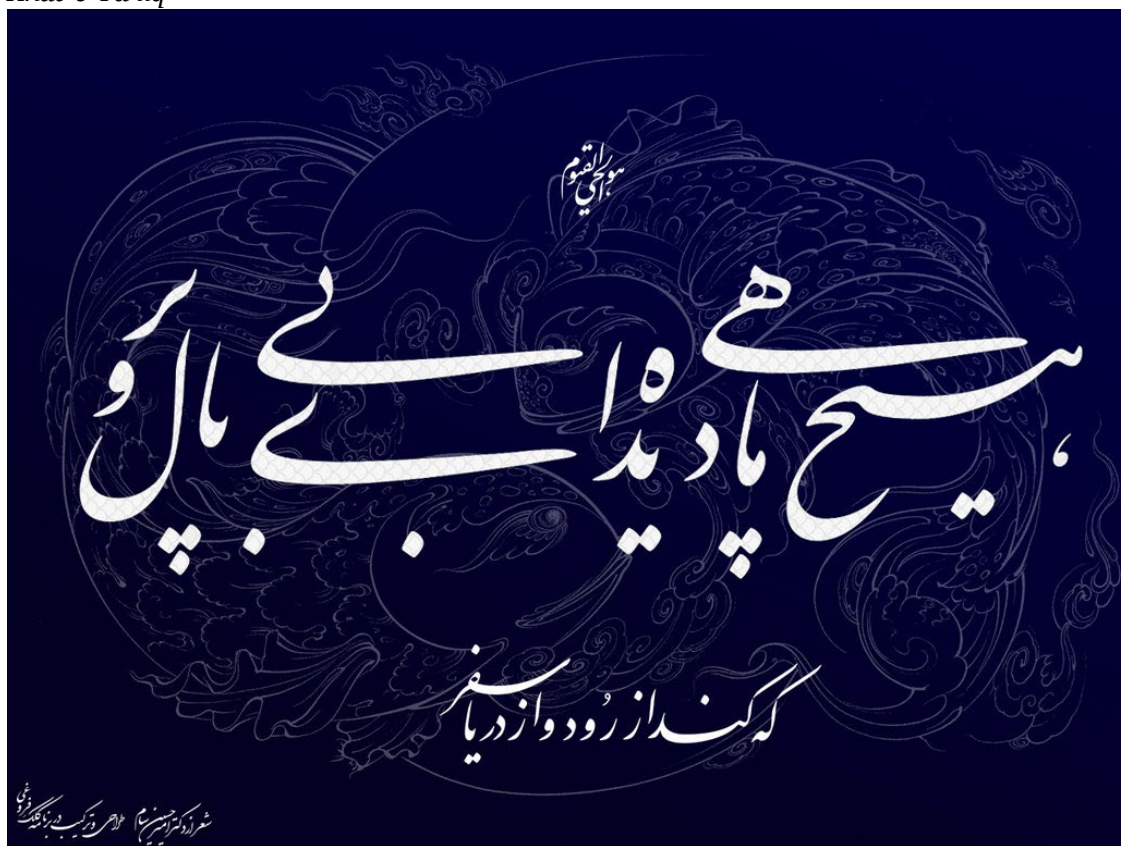


3.8 The Ta'liq Scripts

Ta'liq style was developed in Iran in the 10th century. Hasan ibn Husain Ali was the inventor of this writing script, after that Khawaja Abdul Mali Buk improved the script on large scale so mostly historian often associated the script to him. The major characteristics of the script are; it's rounded and curvical forms and exaggerated horizontal strokes that the letters were derived primarily from the *Riqa'* writing style. Museum, M. P. (n.d.)(2014) *Ta'liq* means 'hanging', and refers to the lightly angular lines of which words flow in it, this writing style gives the hanging look. All the alphabets are in short vertical strokes with wide and extensive parallel strokes. The shapes are bottomless, hook-like, and have high dissimilarity. An alternate called *Shikasteh*, which is normally used in writing the casual texts. In the end of 14th century, *Ta'liq* script was used generally for royal as well as everyday communication. After that *Nasta'liq* took its place. As shown in Figure 7

Figure 8

Khat-e-Ta'liq



3.9 Nasta'liq

Nasta'liq is known as cursive writing style. The creator was Mir 'Ali of Tabriz. He was well-known calligrapher of the Timurid period (1402-1502). *Nasta'liq* was an amalgamation of the *Naskh* and *Ta'liq* style of writing. This style has elongated horizontal writing to elaborate the rounded forms. The diacritical marks were informally sited, and the flowing lines are attractive rather than conventional. *Nasta'liq* was repeatedly combined into the 2 dimensional art work of the Safavid era (16th century) and is usually considered as the most sophisticated of the Iranian scripts. As shown in Figure 8

Figure 9

Khat-e-Nasta'liq

رُبَّ يَوْمٍ بَكَيْتُ مِنْهُ فَلَمَّا صِرْتُ فِي غَيْرِهِ بَكَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ



4. Mughal Contribution in Calligraphy

In the subcontinent, the time period of Mughals saw the calligraphy reached on its peak. Calligraphy played an important role in the cultural life of Mughal India. The higher rate of literacy among the crowned heads and dignity, writing the books of quality became a leisure pursuit of every person. The exterior of every building was decorated with verses of Quran. Only calligraphers were appointed for the writing on constructed buildings so the interiors of all buildings either public or private, were decorated with the work of expert calligraphers. Those Scholars who have expertise in calligraphy were chosen as instructors of princes and princesses and children of dignities. As a result, every building is the example of Quranic calligraphy and all these factors led to the generous benefaction to the calligraphers by all the social order and boosted their social reputation. Museum, M. P. (n.d.)(2014)

5. Time period of Emperor Babur

Babur attacked and conquered Lahore in 1521. Babur was a marvelous Calligrapher and at that time the growth in this field is in peak. Babur designed a typeface and gave it the name as *Khat-i-Babri*. *Khat-i-Babri*, now extinct, probably closer in tone to calligraphic script developed at Heart, it was a common and a use to *Khat* at the time of Temorid and there was a tradition to write Holy Quran by hand sends it to Makkah Moazma and Madina, and

that kind of tradition relates with Babur too. According to Abdul Qadir Badewaan, the Holy Quran was written in *Khat-i-Babri*. Babur's cousin Mashahid and his brother Mir Abdullah were experts in writing *Khat-i-Babri*. This *Khat* was extinct with the death of Babur. Gascoigne, B. (1971).

6. Time period of Emperor Humaiyun

Khat-e-Naskh followed Babur's death and Shir Shah Suri's coming to follower. Epigraphs stand in evidence to Suri's use of Naskh as a Statement of power.

Humayun brought more than a few artisans from Iran, who found a more conducive atmosphere in a relatively humanistic Mughal India. Khuwaja Abdul Samad and Meer Syad Ali Tabrezi were both scribes and painters of great merit.

7. Time period of Emperor Akbar

Akbar's *Tuti-nama* is an earlier example of manuscript is preserved in Cleveland Museum in the writing style of Nask. Due to the heavy influence of the Persian artists at both the Mughal and ottoman courts, *Tuti-nama* script follows the contemporary Ottoman scripts. Gascoigne, B. (1971)

In the late period of Akbar, many documents were written, which presented slowly shift to refined *Nastaliq*. Late Akbari period is survived many epigraphist s.

During period of Akbar, *Khat-i-Nastaliq* was very famous and in practice.

8. Time period of Emperor Jahangir

The age of Jahangir is marked by numerous examples of calligraphic panels and calligraphic albums. Some panels also show technically true representations of plants and animals. Jahangir was a great, creative artist and historian.

9. Time period of Emperor Shah Jahan

During the Shah Jahani period, *Nastaliq* developed rapidly and flourished especially in the culmination of Pashahnama. Shah Jahan and his four sons were great calligraphers. During Sha Jahan's period, *Nastaliq* art were showed on master pieces of architectural monuments especially Taj Mahal.

10. Time period of Emperor Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb was a marvelous expert of *Khat-e-Naskh* and he wrote the Holy Quran many times by himself. In Alamgir age exposed a decline in *Nastaliq* and court duties Shifted to Shakista, following the traditions in Istanbul, where Deewani was developed. Gascoigne, B. (1971). Bahadur Shah Zafar was himself a mature scribe of the Naskhi script, whose album is preserved in the British Library. Time period of Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar Bahadur Shah Zafar was skilled in *Khat-i-Naskh* and *Khat-i-Tighran*.

11. Conclusion

This shows that calligraphy which use in writing Quran and see around us and in old thing is developed by the Mughals in the sub-Continent of India. Mughals gave growth and promote Islamic Calligraphy in India mainly by practicing by own selves or bringing the artisans from all over the Islamic world especially Persia. Muslim calligraphers were always energetic in creating masterpieces of calligraphy on the paper, mosques and other architectural monuments, etc. In present time when the writing is computerized or done in printing press, Hand written Quran is very much alive as an art form, creating beautiful patterns and feeling through the imaginative arrangement of cervical lines, geometric patterns, vibrant colors and rhythm of design arrangement. In the visual expression of words, the artisan applies both accuracy and impulsiveness; both heart and mind, discipline and freedom and the result can be static or dynamic. The uniqueness of Quranic writing elevates it above normal handwriting or print. Contemporary Calligraphy also celebrates art for its own sake, where the verses of Quran or holy words are may become unclear but they arranged beautifully and attractively.

Many artists have learnt the traditional style of writing Quran with basic understanding of its proportion now contemporary artist at the freedom of expression to express their Idea and love with the Quranic style of writing.

References

- Anjuman-e-Khush navis. (20010). Retrieved 6 15, 2014, from <http://www.anjomankhoshnevisan.ir/>
- Bhutta, M. I. (n.d.). *Muslim Calligraphy is Subcontinent*. Retrieved 6 15, 2014, from <http://www.nazariapak.info/Research-corner/Calligraphy-sub.php>
- Elliot, M. (2004). The Art of Calligraphy. *The Arts*, pg 44-46
- Ferraro, C. (n.d.). *History of Calligraphy*. Retrieved 6 15, 2014, from <http://www.proseandletters.com/Books/BookReviews/HistCalliStoryWriting.html>
- Gascoigne, B. (1971). The Brief History of the Great Moghuls.
- Martin, R. C. (2003). *Encyclopedia of Islam*. London: Thomas Gale.
- <https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/history/the-mughal-empire/mughal-calligraphy/#:~:text=Mughal%20Empire%20Achievements%20in%20Calligraphy&text=Their%20achievements%20include%3A,such%20as%20the%20Taj%20Mahal>.
- Munir, A. Arshad, S. and Bukhari, W.N. (2021). Qur'ānic Calligraphy: The Flourishing Art of Divine Words. *Al-Qamar*, Volume 4, Issue 3 (Al-Qamar (alqamarjournal.com)
- Museum, M. P. (n.d.). *Islamic Calligraphy*. Retrieved 6 15, 2014, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cali/hd_cali.htm
- Yolanda Gil, Marcelo Tallis. (n.d.). A Script to Modifying Knowledge . *Information Sciences Institute*.

Maria Ansari is an Assistant Professor at college of Art and Design, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. She got a Master's degree in Visual Arts from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. Her researches are based on traditional and contemporary art and design.

Farjad Faiz is a lecturer at college of Art and Design, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. He got his Master's degree in Visual Arts from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. His researches are based on traditional and contemporary art and design.

Aisha Shoukat, is an Associate Professor at Department of Social Work, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. She got a PhD degree in Social Work from The University of Peshawar, Pakistan. Her researches are based on social work.
