

THE ROLE OF ART IN RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

One of the most beautiful aspects of the human soul is shown in the "art" phenomenon, making it one of the greatest forms of human expression throughout history. The arts and creative people will always play a significant role in shaping society. The significance of art may be traced back to the widespread value placed on the "beautiful friendship" between humans and the natural world. Art, being the essence of human existence, is intrinsically connected to every other facet of humanity, including religion, culture, civilization, and technology. The Bahá' literature may be examined to see how art can serve spiritual, moral, and social purposes. Collectively, these functions represent the spiritual function of art, whose greatest aim is to elevate the human spirit and the quality of human existence. When serving this function, art looks to the worldview presented in divine Revelation for guidance, finds common ground with the key tenets of the world's main faiths, and works to reaffirm the original goal of these institutions, which is to promote spiritual progress and social peace.

KEYWORDS Art, Spiritual, Religious, Human Life

INTRODUCTION

The arts' and religion's mutually beneficial relationship dates back to the beginning of spiritual activity. All kinds of art have a history of being used as instructional resources, worship aids, and means of revelation. For ages, religious organizations have been among the most important patrons of the arts, supporting the creation of everything from choirs to textiles to literature to social dance. There has been a long and rich history of cooperation, but it seems to be threatened by the liberal/conservative issues of the present. Most religious traditions still place an emphasis on artifice, and the production of awe and wonder remains a primary motivation for much artistic production. Incorporating the arts into religious rituals has been shown to boost attendance, enrich participants' spiritual knowledge, and spread tolerance. Moreover, combining religion with the arts is an effective strategy for giving young people a safe "third space" to hang out in and encouraging practical conduct.

One might envision or imagine magnificent temples, beautifully decorated scrolls of holy texts, exquisitely sculpted altars, statues, and icons, or even minutely worked Torah pointers or elaborately carved Qur'an reading stands at the mere mention of the theme of religion, art, and creativity. Whether it be a church, mosque, synagogue, Hindu or Buddhist temple, religious shrine, or any other place of worship, you can be sure to find some breathtaking works of art within. Throughout the ages, people have been motivated by their religion to create amazing works of art that may be seen on the museum shelves. Numerous styles of religious music have been lauded for their aesthetic value. Famous places of worship, worldwide museums, symphony halls, and spiritual music venues are certain places to find breathtaking works of art and architecture. Many topics related to modern religiously inspired art, creativity, and expression are covered in this special edition. Readers are taken to less obvious locations outside of mainstream religious institutions and artistic hubs so they may experience and learn about the intricate webs of relationships that hold together religious, artistic, and creative communities in today's global and globalizing urban centers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FRANK G. BOSMAN (2020) It's not easy to pin down precisely what it is that makes a piece of art 'religious' when the topic of religion and the arts comes up for debate. This article explores the complicated link between art and religion by proposing six possible ways in which a piece of art, any work of art, might be understood as 'religious'. One and the same piece of art may be seen from several angles at the same time; these viewpoints are not exclusive of one another. They also don't rule out the use of different approaches to the study of religion and the arts. These vantage points allow us to see beyond the curtain of what people (may) mean when they talk about religious art and get some

insight. One may examine these phenomena from one of six vantage points: the material, the contextual, the referential, the reflexive, the ceremonial, and the existential. They range from what the artist had in mind to what the audience or listener hears (with or without the aid of indications supplied by the artist and/or the item itself). The author uses the Isenheimer Altarpiece, a renowned sound poem by Hugo Ball, and the video game *Child of Light* to show how definitions of religious art may change depending on the viewer's viewpoint.

Prof Pooja Verma (2020) India's art and architecture reflect the country's deep cultural and spiritual traditions. These artistic expressions mirror the cultural values and worldviews of their creators. Our understanding of their culture and religion is greatly enhanced by their contributions. Spirituality is at the heart of what makes Indian art so special, and it is this tradition that continues to influence contemporary artists. We all know that culture and artistic expression reflect cultural values and social norms. It has been shown that even savages in the stone age utilized cave paintings as a means of communication. India has a rich cultural heritage. Culture and identity are strengthened via the artistic expression of its members. Historically, the Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2500 BCE) is regarded as the genesis of Indian art. Art from ancient India is celebrated the world over because of its religious significance and its beautiful aesthetics, both of which were greatly influenced by the country's traditional focus on nature and spirituality. The values of Indian religion, which ruled the minds of Indian artists, are so intertwined with Indian art that it is impossible to appreciate Indian art entirely without familiarity with these tenets. A spiritual yearning, a quest for meaning beyond this life permeates all of Indian art. The art of India is a source of incredible beauty, ranging from the lively carvings of the temples to the brilliant wall-paintings of Ajanta, to the mysterious art of cave sites and the flamboyant temple traditions. "Religion is nothing but a community of people who collectively support one idea of almighty and thus live according to its norms," the definition states. Artists in India, influenced by the myths of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other faiths, have produced works of unparalleled beauty.

Silvia Arca (2019) Using Christian spirituality, the spirituality of 'immanence' (Spretnak, 2014), the concept of 'Eastern spirituality,' and the sublime as points of departure, this research investigates the function of spirituality in contemporary art and explores the nature of this connection. It discusses spirituality in contemporary art and how the quest for transcendence, sometimes hidden beneath the concept of modern "disenchantment," has recently reemerged in a variety of ways. Despite the reluctance towards this subject in the context of the secularized artistic panorama, this thesis argues, the concern with the spiritual appears to be a lively area of interest in art in recent times by analyzing the work of artists who made the engagement with spirituality a central part of their research. Spiritual art proves to be significant despite significant challenges when it engages with official religions, different cultures, and philosophies because it allows for new ideas and interpretation without necessarily relying on institutionalized beliefs, but rather aiming for a spirituality which is universal. It's also possible to go further into this subject by using it as a springboard to learn more about the world, yourself, and others.

Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (2017) *Diane Apostolos-Cappadona's Religion in the Arts: History and Method* provides an account of the development of this distinct area of study from its inception in the 19th century to the current day, including its methodological journey through questions of repatriation, museum displays, and globalization. Since the 1970s, when the idea that art was merely a visual exegesis of texts was prevalent, the study of religion and the arts has become more malleable and flexible, according to Apostolos-Cappadona, allowing for the inclusion of the study of material, popular, and visual culture, as well as gender. She also provides a thoughtful examination of how academic thinking has changed over time, from when it was dominated by conventional iconographies to when it was challenged by globalization and technology. If you're new to the study of religion and the arts, *Religion and the Arts: History and Method* is a must-read introduction to the fundamental topics and points of view.

Rina Arya (2016) Art with spiritual qualities such as revelation, renewal, and contemplation is discussed, illustrating its range and depth. These days, it's more important to ask, "What is the nature of the dialogue between art and spirituality? How do the two come together, and in what form does the meeting take?" than it is to probe the historical ties between the two. Widespread use of audio-visual and other modes of expressing the spiritual allows for new kinds of encounters to take place in

settings other than traditional museums and galleries. These new forms place new demands on viewers; they bring about a deeper feeling of connection between viewer and subject (often via immersion), which may lead to a heightened awareness that enhances one's sense of presence and embodiment. We find that the number of possible spiritual interpretations is comparable to the number of people who watch this show.

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION

Words like "righteousness," "obedience," "reward," "routine," "arithmetic," "Kish," "virtue," and "right" all have Islamic academics, and one interesting thing to note is that the examples they use are:

(1) Egocentric preoccupation with the nitty-gritty obscures the big picture, which is that religion is a system of shared beliefs and ideals founded on shared norms of morality and goodness. The first section of the definition of (great master of contemporary Arabic-Farsi) religion, thinking, and theoretical characteristics.

(2) Religion provides the means by which a man may achieve his goals in life, which include a system of beliefs, ethics, and legal norms. There are two facets to religion in this sense: Human and Divine Faiths in Religion.

The restrictions all boil down to his making money and not being forced to comply. Be unburdened by duty and responsibility, as well as the hostility to divine religion and its accomplishments and the way one approaches religion (Sura M, verse 70).

In the light of its teachings, divine religion reveals its actual freedom to regulate your whims via its tenets, which include beliefs, moral and practical norms for guiding. He should take into account the fact that the heavenly and human religions constitute a closed system. Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi has the weight of the religious, linguistic, and political worlds on his shoulders.

Concept of Art

Human cultures are rife with "art" depicting social issues. One of the most essential concerns of human existence, "art" may be downloaded together with a history of human civilization. The spiritual dimensions of his work cannot be understood apart from his commitment to "telling the truth" (through art). Long-form Vashkal cipher symbols, manifested in art, signify a deal sealed by the Ultra naturalness of human existence. There is now a solution. As the Mazaheri hold holy, respect, and well-being in the presence of both primitive and contemporary civilized man.

Nation's language and literature, especially the English language, utilize the word "art" to indicate a variety of things, including but not limited to: knowledge, wisdom, grace, virtue, integrity, intellect, and the subtleties of human expression. Humans have curated the arts to ensure your enjoyment. What artists and audiences look for in a piece of art is something that promotes inner calm, joy, and sweetness. Where the term "beauty" came from as a lovely artistic concept. Although it is impossible for the human intellect to be unfamiliar with the notion of beauty, art. Even while it's a gorgeous piece of art, it doesn't really do anything to attract his target demographic. Each member of the ANSA sees beauty differently, but that's partly because they have so much in common.

The idea of exquisite art, however, does not aid in properly explaining it. Instead, it's the skill of getting to the bottom of what makes a person tick spiritually and emotionally that's at the heart of this. The ability to differentiate "the art, transport sensationalism artist is no longer human" as a piece of art and the commentary on it is what sets it apart. Artists who are too limited in their scope to use the whole range of human emotion and experience in their works risk provoking the emotional equivalent of cholera with their creations. Feelings, connections, and a spiritual affinity with the audience are all shared. Novel works by artists, for which the general public has failed to grasp their meaning. Stability and attractiveness are increasingly ascribed to everything of human existence, not only the arts (photography, painting, sculpture, music composition, cinema, theater, architecture, design, cartoon).

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ART

Faith may be seen as a "overlay" (color) in life. The overlay is a term used to describe how people of one religion present themselves visually different from those of other faiths. The same principle applies to the classification of works of art; if they were formed in accordance with religious principles, the artist's position would be that of an agent of religious identity. It is widely accepted that art and religion have an important, reciprocal connection. When it comes to the significance of religion and the interpretation of Scripture, Schwann (1383) argues that the two are intertwined nearly

as much as art. Since the class properties (members) of corporeal beings require more to art than to governing and mystical beliefs and since the class properties (members) of corporeal beings need more to art than to Scripture for explanation and interpretation of Scripture to the art (and vice versa). Indirectly, the community can't function without art.

Art as a Means of Ennoblement

However, issues emerge if we go beyond this overarching premise. How do people use art to honor God and adore Him? In what ways do the arts serve humanity and provide access to God? How can one use art to develop their soul?

There are metaphysical, moral, and social dimensions to the arts that play an important part in the Bahá'í teachings. It is said that in one of his speeches, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity...." In a flash he elaborated:

...but the only true way is through the Teachings of Gael. Musk is like this glass.... and the Teachings of God, the utterances of God, are like the water. When the glass or chalice is absolutely pure and clear, and the water is perfectly fresh and limpid, then it will confer Life.... (Bahá'í Writings 8)

A believer's account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's meeting with an actor in London goes as follows:

An actor mentioned the drama, and its influence. "The; drama is of the utmost importance." said 'Abdu'lBahá. "It has been a great educational power in the past; it will be so again." He described how as a young boy he witnessed the Mystery Play of 'Alí's Betrayal and Passion, and how it affected him so deeply that he wept and could not sleep for many nights. ('Abdu'l-Bahá in London 93)

It's important to think about the far-reaching consequences of this remark. The dramatic arts are seldom practiced in isolation from one another. Poetry or dramatic prose, dance, music, and other ancillary arts may all play a role in this kind of performance, and in many cultures they do. The "educational power" of the arts comes from their capacity to investigate and memorialize pivotal moments in history, to reinforce the divine teachings and exhortations, to show the results of disobedience to spiritual law, and to reveal the human soul in action, i.e., the process of spiritual development. In a nutshell, like other arts, they may help people gain insight into the spiritual world, which is one way they satisfy 'Abdu'l-Bahá's demand that the humanities and sciences serve as "a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest." In doing so, they are performing a service on a mystical level, namely, they are aiding in the consolidation of the bond between humankind and its celestial monarch.

In the next text, 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions music as a way of assisting to bring the souls toward the radiant Source of divine love, providing yet another example of the service the arts may provide on the material plane:

Thank thou God that thou art instructed in music and melody, singing with pleasant voice the glorification and praise of the Eternal, the Living. I pray to God that thou mayest employ this talent in prayer and supplication, in order that the souls may become quickened, the hearts may become attracted and all may become inflamed with the fire of the love of God!

BEAUTY REFLECTED IN THE CREATION AND IN ART

This essay cannot hope to provide even a cursory comparison of the viewpoint obtained from Bahá'í teachings with those of existing, particular conceptions of beauty. However, there is one example in which we must investigate what is not so much a theory as a general trend present in most contemporary Western thought on beauty; this tendency demands our attention since it is central to the notions we are discussing.

Different Western ideas of beauty all boil down to the same central tenet: aesthetic pleasure is beauty's only true function. In certain cases (like hedonism), sensory pleasure is favored. It's possible that, as in naturalistic theory, the enjoyment comes from the heady challenge of figuring out what goes where and why. The recognition of artistic patterns that correspond to instinctive mental patterns (as in Gestalt theory), an intuitive appreciation of qualitative vividness (as in contextualistic theory), an appreciation of the work of art as an integrated organic whole (as in organistic theory), or the recognition and appreciation of ideal forms (as in formistic theory) are all possible sources. In certain cases, such as in expressionism, the artist and the audience may find mutual gratification in the experience of being emotionally moved by the work. Although the many theories of beauty place

emphasis on different aspects of aesthetic experience, they all share the belief that beauty's primary function is to provide meaningless pleasure to the senses, the mind, and the heart. A lot of work has been put in by philosophers and theorists in the 19th and 20th century to develop this idea.

When did our contemporary standard of beauty become so pervasive? Attractiveness of spiritual perfection was the view of late Middle Ages Christian European thinkers (Coomaraswamy, Christian and Oriental Philosophy 112), not a frivolous source of pleasure. Is it a coincidence that contemporary beliefs regarding beauty as an aim in itself began and flourished in the decades after the Renaissance, when Europe wandered away from the beaches of a religious world orientation into the seas of secularism and materialism?

No one could possibly disagree that being in the presence of anything beautiful may be a source of joy, whether that joy is physical, mental, or spiritual. The results of the many contemporary theories of beauty are especially useful in this respect due to their study and insights into some of the ways in which beauty is perceived. Such research, however, does not seem to be comprehensive enough. The "how" of beauty is discussed at length, but the "why" is not touched upon. However, they don't provide much insight into the potential functions of these nuanced and delicate processes beyond the obvious goal of providing pleasure to those who perceive beauty. The goal here is to argue that experiencing beauty for its own sake is more than just about the pleasure it may provide.

Because the Universe's Master Builder planned it that way, every living thing may find joy in the things that come easily to them. The pup loves to run and play. The baby enjoys playing. A good night's sleep may do wonders for a fatigued body that has been working hard all day. In each of these cases, one may see not just pleasure, but also divine intelligence working for a greater good. For the simple reason that a dog's health depends on it. Physical and mental growth occurs simultaneously in a youngster who plays. In addition to providing a welcome respite, a good night's sleep may help Bahá' get psyched up for another day of service. Regarding this topic, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

... man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. (Bahá'í World Faith 384)

CONCLUSION

Islamic art encrypts and expresses a religious belief in the spiritual realms, just as the allegorical language of every religious code does. Religious art has always made sense since it serves as a visual representation of the spiritual realm. Art may supply spiritual ideals and religious standards; religion can foster both the development of art and the expansion of the religious community. The artistic expression will be infused with a religious quality as a result of the interplay between the two strands. The qualities of Mysore religious art should be discussed and debated, but specific works of art should not be named because to the diversity of faiths and the challenges that arise from them and the other arts. Attempting even a cursory assessment of the areas of agreement and variance between conventional, particular conceptions of beauty and the perspective developed here from Bahá' teachings is beyond the scope of this essay. The Great Designer made it so that all living things enjoy the things that come easily to them.

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