

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC
CALLIGRAPHY: *NASTA‘LIQ*, PERSIAN
CALLIGRAPHY INFLUENCES ON MUGHAL
ARCHITECTURE OF 17TH CENTURY**

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Abstract

The investigation on Islamic calligraphy, particularly *Nasta‘liq* calligraphy, mainly focuses only on the history of calligraphy, calligraphers’ biographies, and calligraphy’s origins and training. No significant or pervasive research has been done on the identity or characteristics of the calligraphy forms and their traditional principles. Fewer studies have examined the visual character of calligraphy academically or considered it a research subject in its own right. Moreover, the Persian influence on Mughal architectural calligraphy faces a recognition gap and there is a need for more academic documentation. These are the particulars that this research aims to address. The research focuses on the characteristics and prominent features of Persian calligraphy, especially *Naskh* and *Nasta‘liq* writing styles of Persian origin. The study also dwells on the Persian calligraphy influences on the mosque architecture of the Mughal era. This research explored the physicality and intellectual characteristics of the Mughal calligraphy visuals. Two art theories—instrumentalism and formalism—are combined as a research method.

Keywords: *Persian Calligraphy, Mughal Architecture, Nasta‘liq, Formalism, Instrumentalism*

1. Introduction

This article aims to understand the Persian influence on Mughal architecture through calligraphy. Moreover, this article will explore the characteristics of Persian calligraphy and analyse Mughal calligraphy artefacts painted or crafted on Mughal monuments, i.e., Mosques. This objective leads to the question of the primary qualities of Persian calligraphy and how *Naskh* and *Nasta'liq* impacted Mughal architectural calligraphy. To address this argument is significant as it broaden the context of Persian calligraphy on Mughal art literature. By integrating Formalism and Instrumentalism strategies with calligraphic forms, the objective is attained.

2. Research Methodology

Formalism and Instrumentalism, two art theories, are combined in this qualitative study as a research method. These two approaches are widely used in art history for research that provides meaningful results in the humanities, social sciences, and art history fields. Formalism is a critical approach that contends a work of art's form, regardless of how it was created and is utterly visual, is more significant than its narrative content or connection to its surroundings¹. A formalist painter would pay special attention to colours, brushstrokes, shapes, lines, and composition². Compared to impressionism and post-impressionism, formalist art places unprecedented emphasis on the project's visual components³.

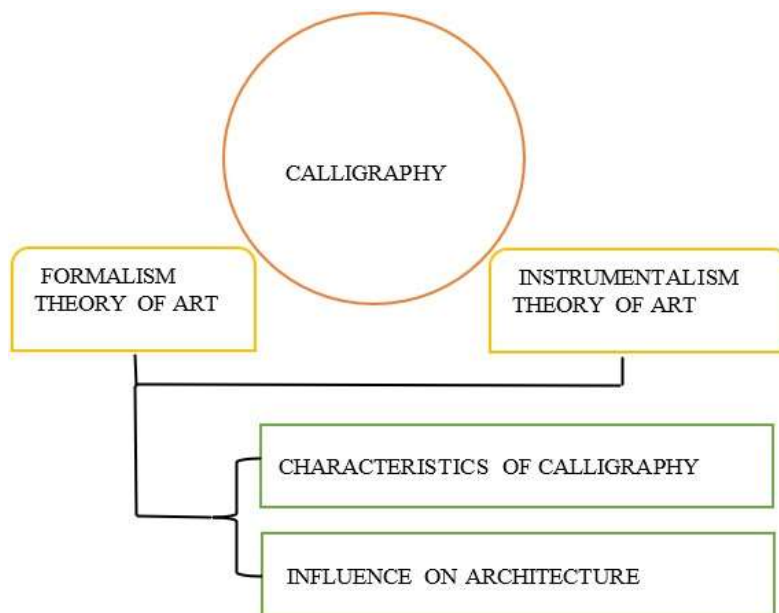


Figure 1: Research Framework

A booklet describing formalism was issued in 1890 by post-impressionist artist and art historian Maurice Denis⁴. He underlined that the inherent pleasure of the artwork ought to occur before the theme of the painting. For an instrumentalist, the composition is not a factor; only context is. According to this belief, the most effective paintings convey a message or impact people's worldviews⁵. In contrast to other theories, instrumentalism maintains that art is praiseworthy when it strives to affect or transform society. The concept of instrumentalism in art holds that works of art should or must accomplish something other than being purely beautiful or decorative⁶. Instrumentalists appreciate works of art that inspire them to take action in the world through their innately aesthetic means⁷.

3. Research Problem

Generally, the research on Islamic calligraphy, particularly *Nasta'liq* calligraphy, is restricted to calligraphy's histories, calligraphers' biographies, and calligraphy's origins and instruction⁸. No significant or challenging research has been done on the identity or characteristics of the calligraphic form itself and its conventional principles. Fewer studies have academically examined the calligraphic form's visual aspects or considered them a research subject. Furthermore, there needs to be more documentation and recognition of the Persian influence on Mughal architectural calligraphy. These specifics are what this study aims to cover.

Nasta'liq is somewhat isolated in terms of being considered unique subject in its own right or as a self-contained system of meaning⁹. Iranian researchers have looked at calligraphy extensively, particularly from a historical perspective¹⁰. Numerous historical works in these studies have examined calligraphy's emergence and evolution across various eras¹¹. Furthermore, additional research on the biographies of calligraphers has been published in Iran. Additionally, some researchers have presented dissertations on calligraphy's historical and contemporary principles¹². For calligraphers, these publications contain deductive analyses that are constructive. Further, some calligraphic researchers have examined calligraphy through the lens of mysticism, theosophy, or theology; they have examined calligraphy concerning other fields of the arts and studied calligraphy from a comparative perspective.

For instance, in some countries (like Turkey), Derman examined numerous calligraphies, particularly *Thuluth*, and the RCIHAC published the findings of his investigations¹³. The primary resource for teaching calligraphy in Tunisia and other northern African nations is the Modern book Approach to Improve Calligraphy by Muhammad al Saleh Khomasi (1910-1992)¹⁴. Some studies on Islamic arts conducted in the 20th century discussed the styles of Islamic calligraphy and Arabic scripts¹⁵. The exploration and

aesthetic shifts of Persian calligraphy, a significant inspiration for South Asia Mughal art, must be included as a research subject in this field which is what this research aims to do.

4. Literature in Retrospect: The History and Evolution of Islamic Calligraphy

Scholars research calligraphy, especially Arabic calligraphy, which is particularly used by Muslim artists extensively. *Kufi* and *Naskh* are two forms of writing that sprang from diverse calligraphy techniques and were popular throughout the early Islamic period¹⁶. One of these two writing systems was used for the Nabataean alphabet in Kufic. It had a square fundamental form with an angular or sharp end. The Holy Qur'ān was the first to use this writing style in handwritten copies. Subsequently, the same writing style was added to the buildings constructed by the older Islamic Empires. The second type of script, circular and cursive, is known as *Naskhi*¹⁷.



Figure 2: Nabataean alphabets in Kufic style in the 2nd Century

This script was utilized more in professional or company documents and correspondence due to its fluid style and simplicity of writing. *Naskhi*, in the Kufic aesthetic of the second millennium BC, was employed for several purposes in many places, with the

exception of the northern part of Africa, where it evolved into the Maghribi form¹⁸. "Khatt-e Koofi," which is an additional intricate variant of "Khatt-e Moakli," an Arabic style of writing, has developed from this *Naskhi*, i.e., Following that, calligraphy flourished during the Umayyad era.

The history of calligraphy, as a whole, illustrates how broad this topic is for research and practice. Modern calligraphers still follow the traditions of the early Muslim calligraphers. Modern and modified forms in contemporary calligraphy add to the existing capabilities of classical and creative calligraphy. Nevertheless, modern or current calligraphy also affects the fine arts since it merges abstract aesthetics with traditional principles¹⁹. Many calligraphers keep practicing traditional calligraphy despite honing their trendy calligraphy techniques²⁰. For instance, even though he wrote using a Qalam or pen, prolific calligrapher Sadequain frequently used paint and a brush on canvases.



Figure 3: Sadequain's Symbolic Calligraphy

A brief summary of Iranian calligraphy's development since the advent of Islam; Iranians used a variety of writing systems, including Cuneiform, Pahlavi, and Avestan²¹. After accepting Islam and the Arabic language, they started writing Persian in Arabic scripts. The modern Iranian letters were built on the Arabic alphabet after that because Iran's principal scripts required to be updated. Approximately a century before Islam, in the 15th century, the Arabic alphabet was developed. Two Coptic and Syriac scripts support this. The Kufic and preceding *Naskh* forms were the foundation for the main Arabic scripts. In the early Islamic period, Kufic and *Naskh* were both widely utilized; *Naskh* was used for other books and

correspondence, whereas Kufic was intended for the Holy Qur'ān, writing, cornices, and epigraphs. These two calligraphic genres persisted in their simplicity and primitivism until the second century AH. However, they gradually inspired other types of writing as other Islamic nations, including Iran adopted them²². Salouti claims that calligraphy had yet to appear at the turn of the second century and was not well practiced²³. Under the Abbasid caliphate (about the eighth century AD), the Barmakid, an Iranian clan with influence in the Islamic empire, initiated an attempt to promote Islamic calligraphy. Additionally, during the rule of the Abbasid Caliphate, Ibn Muqla Shirazi (886–940 AD), calligraphy was revered and assigned the term calligraphy²⁴. The endeavour that Ibn Muqla started was polished and completed by Ibn al-Bawwab. Calligraphy developed over two centuries until it reached Yaghoot-Mostasami, who divided and grouped several Islamic writing styles into six calligraphy types. He united the calligraphies of *Thuluth*, *Reyhan*, *Mohaqaq*, *Toqi*, *Reqa*, and *Naskh* in his six pens, which are referred to as the Pens of Principle²⁵. Within the Islamic calligraphies, three calligraphic types that must be specifically classified as Iranian appeared in the ninth century AH. Despite being created using the Arabic alphabet, they are not composed or shaped like Arabic calligraphy. According to academics like Salouti, their letter movement and composition are remarkably similar to the Avestan and Pahlavi Old Persian writing traditions. Three distinct calligraphy types are *Ta'liq*, *Nasta'liq*, and *Shikastah*. Islamic calligraphy is said to have advanced and developed most brilliantly between the eighth and tenth centuries. Around this time, virtually all cultural societies were acquainted with the elegance and precision of this art. At this time, kings and monarchs paid enormous attention to calligraphy and were not reluctant to support and encourage calligraphers²⁶. Some kings and queens were accomplished calligraphers as well.

5. Findings: Characteristics and Aesthetics of Persian Calligraphy

One of the most renowned arts in Persian history and a firm representative of Persian tradition is calligraphy. The origins of calligraphy in Iran can be traced to the pre-Islamic period when the Zoroastrian-influenced Persian society highly valued elegant and legible writing²⁷. Six calligraphic styles in Iran (*Tahqīq*, *Reyhan*, *Thulth*, *Naskh*, *Toqi*, and *Reqah*) were developed a thousand years ago. For several centuries, these subgenres were popular in Persia. In the 12th century, the “*Naskh*” and “*Reqah*” forms of Persian calligraphy were blended to create the new genre known as “*Ta'liq*”. Eventually, in the 14th century, *Naskh* and *Ta'liq* were mixed, giving rise to *Nasta'liq*, the most renowned type of Persian calligraphy²⁸.

In writing the Persio-Arabic script during the past 500 years, *Nasta'liq* calligraphy has been one of the primary Iranian script

styles. In contrast to its predecessors, *Nasta'liq* is fluid and has organic curves²⁹. A new style known as cursive *Nasta'liq* was developed in the 17th century. The principles of this style are the same as those of *Nasta'liq*, but it allows for more fluid movement. In contrast, it is more curled and stretched. Iranology has always extolled the magnificent art of calligraphy and its various embellishments³⁰.



Figure 4: Persian Nasta'liq Calligraphy

Iranian arts are so reliant on ornate calligraphy that places and things without it seems deficient. More than any other country, Iranians have embellished and enhanced old buildings, metallic utensils, and earthenware through calligraphy. The letters and other components that make up a word in calligraphy have long been regarded as artistic icons because they always possess unmistakable aesthetic qualities³¹. Because of exquisite and delicate Persian

calligraphy in most of Iran's handwritten volumes, numerous literary compilations by Shahnameh, Hafez, Golestan, Boostan, and Khayam, as well as the Holy Qur'ān, have been recognized as invaluable aesthetic creations.³²

6. Journey of *Naskh* and *Ta'liq* toward *Nas'taliq*

In ancient Persia and all through history, there were a number of additional languages spoken and used, including "Ilami," "Avestaaee," "Pahlavi," and "Farsi-e-Mianeh." It is believed that the ancient Persian alphabet was developed between 500 and 600 BC to provide the Achaemenid rulers with funeral writings³³. Although the systems of writing included horizontal, vertical, and diagonal nail-shaped letters, they were referred to as "Script of Nails" or "*Khat-e-Mikhi*" in Farsi. It took several centuries before further scripts involving "Avestaaee" and "Pahlavits", were created. The third-century symphonies of Zarathustra were composed in the Avestan alphabet, commonly known as "Avestaaee". The extinct Indo-Iranian language Avestan is related to Old Persian and Sanskrit. The Avestaaee alphabet was written employing a feather pen, generally on layers of animal hide, in contrast to nail writing, which was created on smooth stones. It was connected to the sacred texts of the "Avestaa" Zoroastrians' sacred book.



Figure 5: Naskh, Taliq and Nastaliq Calligraphy Styles

This writing system has been notable for having similarities to Arabic writing systems like “Sols” and “*Naskh*”, which were developed centuries later. Avestaaee, akin to Latin scripts, inscribed the letters separately next to adjacent ones without joining them to form words³⁴. But the writing was done from left to right. Persians developed the contemporary Farsi alphabet by modifying the Arabic script to be compatible with Farsi after the founding of Islam in the seventh century. To create the 32 Persian (Farsi) letters still in use today, Iranians introduced additional four letters to the Arabic alphabet, which already had 28 characters.

Regardless of a few deteriorates that have been more or less perceptible throughout calligraphy’s history, calligraphy has managed to avoid extinction. This is shown by the emergence of various methods for writing, aesthetic modifications, and improvements in Persian calligraphy alongside evaluations of basic aesthetic variances and the level of evolution accomplished³⁵. Iranian painters decorated mosques and other religious structures, wooden doors, ceramics, and metallic things throughout the Islamic era using the Arabic script. Calligraphy flourished even further with the creation of the Holy Qur’ān, *Shahnamah*, and other literature, and in the centuries that followed, it reached its height of perfection.

During the Safavid era, talented Iranian calligraphers invented many more Persian writing styles. Iran has produced wonderful calligraphic works on numerous tablets, literature, and exquisite handcrafted items³⁶. Around the world, writing is seen as a tool for understanding settings, but in Iran, writing has evolved into an esteemed art. Art specialists worldwide frequently utilize Persian calligraphy to embellish their private collections and libraries because of their need for knowledge of the substance of Persian handwriting. The most eloquent artistic ideas are expressed via proficiency in Persian calligraphy. The letters and other components that make up a word in calligraphy have long been regarded as artistic icons because they always possess unmistakable aesthetic qualities³⁷.

“*Nasta’liq*” is a particularly popular contemporary variation of traditional Persian calligraphy. It is referred to as the “Bride of the Calligraphy Scripts”. Much has changed since then because this handwriting style has such a strong base. It seems like “Mir Ali Tabrizi” has only been perfected over the past seven centuries after discovering the optimal lettering and artistic concepts³⁸. It is crucial to observe that *Nas’taliq*, unlike its ancestors, follows natural curves. In other words, unlike Arabic characters, which conform to logical/geometrical forms, *Nasta’liq* follows nature and natural curves. Natural curves and those used in *Nasta’liq* have many similarities, some of which are seen here. As a result, it proves that

Nasta'liq appears personal and cursive because of its original character and propensity for the natural world. "Cursive *Nasta'liq*" or "*Shikastah Nasta'liq*" was developed in the 17th century. Although it allows more customizable movements, the rules for this calligraphy style are the same as those for *Nasta'liq*. It is slightly more stretchy and curling. While some argue that "Moteza-Qoli Shamloo" is the style's inventor, others contend that "Mohammad Shafee Heravi" was the first to make Cursive *Nasta'liq* popular. This method was refined about a century later by the well-known artist "Darvish Abdolmajid Taleqani"³⁹. The most notable modern calligraphy in this genre is undoubtedly "Yadollah Kaboli."

In conclusion, *Nasta'liq* is the most sophisticated and technically difficult type of Persian calligraphy. Strict rules govern the graphic shape of the letters, how letters are combined to make words, and how the full calligraphy creation is put together. The second most popular Persian calligraphy style, "Cursive *Nasta'liq*" or "*Shikastah Nasta'liq*", noticeably follows the same rules as *Nasta'liq* but with more freedom.

7. Conceptual Meanings of Calligraphy on Mosques

Islamic calligraphy is widely used in Islamic art and architecture and has evolved into one of the critical elements of Muslim buildings, particularly the mosque or masjid. This enhances the notion that various calligraphic writing styles can be used as independent aesthetic elements for particular locations⁴⁰. The calligraphy's adaptability and other attributes allow for additional decoration of mosque buildings that are both unique in design and consistent with Islamic worldviews⁴¹. In general, calligraphy scripts are used to decorate many mosques. This is because calligraphy provides Islamic principles to buildings and adds to their aesthetic appeal.

Islamic calligraphy exquisitely penned holy text strongly connects to the Divine Words of God⁴². However, it is not well understood where the decorative scripts came from or how they were chosen and created for the particular mosque. Even though many modern mosques are decorated with calligraphic scripts, very little is understood about the decorative calligraphic scripts that have become integral to their architectural value. Due to the complexity of calligraphic scripts' styles and scriptwriting, more research needs to be done on how to classify them and define their use as architectural decoration finely and modestly.

Islamic calligraphic scripts have evolved into various styles throughout history, making them challenging to identify. Relying on their country of origins and history, traditional calligraphers wrote scripts employing a variety of approaches. Additionally, several

instances exist of using different scripts to improve works of art while promoting various uses and applications⁴³. According to Jainal, calligraphers must consistently practice writing and maintain their aesthetic ability.

To accomplish coherence while avoiding complexity, muddles, and errors unquestionably requires a high level of competence and specialised artistry⁴⁴. A similar phenomenon may be seen in mosques; hence a systematic technique is necessary to detect and classify applications and placements of the scripts on architecture.



Figure 6: Mughal Monument, Buland Darwaza, India

It will be easier to identify categories of calligraphy scripts essential for their continued sustainable development if a profile of Islamic calligraphy scripts used for mosque decoration is created. Therefore, this study examines the aesthetic characteristics of the calligraphy used in the Mughals mosque's components and

compositional categories. Based on Arabic script, the calligraphy is interpreted following a specific Muslim community's cultural and aesthetic systems. As a result, it is also referred to as Arabic calligraphy.

This community shares a common Islamic cultural heritage. Due to its significance as a means of revelation, Arabic is a language of Islam. As a result, Arabic calligraphy and Islamic calligraphy are closely related and relevant. Islamic calligraphy is thus a pervasive writing style that serves as an abstract representation of Islam.

8. Persian Influence and Mughal Architecture: Discussion

During the Mughal Empire, bilateral ties between Iran and India peaked in many areas of life. The development of their societal and political interactions is called the "Golden Era" for this reason⁴⁵. In the sixteenth century, the Mughal dynasty strove to take control of India as the Safavid Empire grew in Persia. India and Persia both attained great strength under these dynasties. The links between these two countries also involved many other factors, such as politics, diplomacy, lifestyle and culture, literature, trade, and religion⁴⁶. The calligraphic embellishment of the Wazir Khan Mosque (Mughal era, 17th century) and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque (17th century, Safavid period) are the outstanding examples of the calligraphy influence.

In the same century as the Safavids and the Mughals, aesthetic and artistic commerce resulted in a significant effect of Safavid art and craft on Mughal structures and ornamentation. Furthermore, the Persian language was used by the Mughals to establish their empire in India. Persian functioned as the official language of governance in Mughal courts, and the Mughals also embraced Persian law and the Persian religion (Islam)⁴⁷.

Despite the collapse of the Mughal Empire, the educated elite continued to communicate privately in Persian, which laid the groundwork for Indo-Muslim culture. Strong cultural connections exist between the Safavid era in Persia and the Mughal Empire in India. Visually appealing objects like miniatures, architecture, calligraphy, coins, bookbinding, carpets, jewellery, and pottery are particularly striking examples of these cultural consequences⁴⁸.

The two architectural forms, iwans and arches, are fundamentally equivalent because Mughal and other Islamic Indian projects employed Iranian and Persian architects, which is how Islamic Persian architecture inspired Mughal architecture. The pre-existing Hindu architecture, as well as foreign architectural influences like Islamic and Persian designs, had an impact on the Mughal style of architecture as it evolved in India and the surrounding South Asian countries in the 16th and 17th centuries⁴⁹.

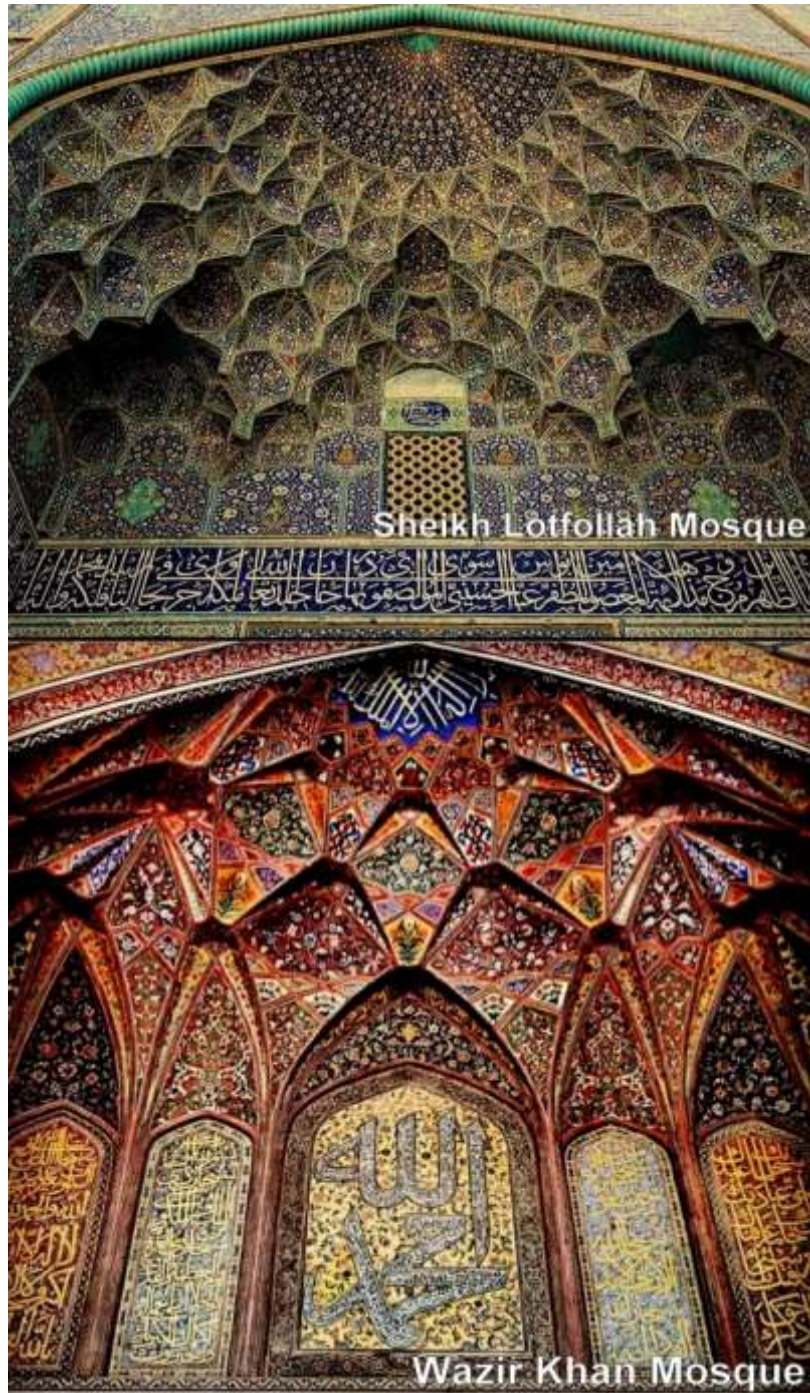


Figure 7: Comparison of Sheikh Lotfollah and Wazir Khan Mosque

In contrast, despite South Asia's proximity to the Persian World and the fact that Persian architecture preceded Islamic design and emerged as early as 5000 BC, it is conceivable that the Mughals

drew inspiration from their neighbours. Iwans are vaulted areas surrounded by three walls and an entrance. In modern times, especially in Islamic Persia, South Asia, and to a lesser extent, the Arabian Peninsula and various territories of the Islamic Empire in North Africa, these gateway-like architectural features are frequently used for religious and secular buildings⁵⁰. While two well-known structures, the Great Mosque of Isfahan from Persian architecture and the Badshahi mosque from Mughal architecture, show the frequent use of arches.

In addition to housing Masyrabiya's windows and lowering the quantity of sunlight that enters the building, it was built for aesthetic reasons. Both architectural styles have large gardens or pools with fountains as standout features. There are well-kept gardens with fountains in front of the mosque. The domes of both architectural kinds share a similar shape: they rest on top of a cylindrical drum, then taper to a point and are capped with finials. There are occasionally many tiny domes gracing the rooftops of Mughal constructions. Both kinds of architecture exhibit remarkable symmetry; it is common for a building to have an equal number of pillars, arches, and minarets on each side⁵¹. The planning of the gardens and pools is typically similar, giving the sense of a mirror. Muqarnas, a stalactite-like design, are frequently used under arches, especially under the vaults of the Iwans.

Calligraphy was used as decorative accents in both designs around the Iwan's gate, under cornices, and all over the building's arches. Both architectural forms entirely employ pierced screens as windows, yet there are some significant Mashrabias distinctions.

Post-Islamic Persian architecture was greatly influenced by Islamic architecture and pre-Islamic cultures, such as the Elamites, Achaemenids, Parthians, Byzantines, Chinese, and Sassanids⁵². Persian, Islamic, and Hindu architectural styles all influenced Mughal construction. This impact may be evident in the building carvings and decorations; for example, the inlaid floral embellishments on the minarets, which are popular in Hinduism and resemble flower stalks, manifest this influence. Mughal architecture, which is directly borrowed from ancient Indian buildings, features groves in its turns as opposed to the smooth curves of Persian arches.

The Safavid and Mughal empires were amicable throughout the reigns of Babur, the first Mughal emperor, and Humayon (after returning from Persia, the king hired numerous Safavid-Persian artists)⁵³. Several Persian politicians and bureaucrats who were crucial to the Mughal Empire's everyday operations were also employed by the Mughal court. Even though the early Mughal emperors had close ties to the Safavid court, Timurid architecture was widely incorporated into the early Mughal structures for two reasons.

First off, there wasn't much opportunity for Babur and Humayon to learn about indigenous Indian styles during the early Mughal era. Due to the fact that Babur was initially a Timurid and Humayon had lived in Persia for a considerable amount of time, the Mughal rulers also promoted and showed interest in the migration of Persian artists and architects. Throughout Akbar's reign, this migration persisted. Another theory is that the early Safavid monarchy, contemporaneous with the Mughal era, was highly influenced by Timurid architecture⁵⁴. As a result, early Mughal constructions rather than Safavid design were transferred and influenced by Timurid architects who were still employed by the Safavid Empire, Safavid artisans who went to the Indian Empire, or new Safavid builders who preferred to use Timurid components and concepts.

Akbar skilfully merged Babur and Humayun's well-known architectural fancies from the early Mughal Empire. Instead of being inspired by foreign architectural types during the high period, when it reached its zenith of growth, regional architectural styles significantly impacted the Mughal architectural style⁵⁵. At this time, Safavid architecture was at its pinnacle of magnificence and power. Due to the expanding ties between the Safavid and Mughal eras in various areas of life, including politics, diplomacy, culture, literature, trade, and religion, Safavid architectural models were utilized in Mughal projects. Safavid architects profited from the wealthy and mighty Safavid architecture during the early Mughal era through deals with Safavid architects.



Figure 8: Safavid and Mughals *Nast'aliq* Persian Calligraphy of 17th Era

9. Calligraphy, an Architectural Ornament for Islamic Architecture

Islamic culture has a rich history of beautiful and antiquity arts. The most popular form of art in the world is Islamic architecture. The most critical arts in Islamic architecture are Islamic calligraphy and decoration, also referred to as the heart and soul of Islamic art. Islamic architecture, namely the mosque, is regarded as a representation of Islamic architecture. Mosques worldwide are built in various architectural styles, and the interior and outside are adorned with Islamic patterns and calligraphy. The Holy Qur'ān makes multiple references to the function and significance of mosques. The most revered and significant component of Islamic art and architecture is calligraphy. Notably, the Holy Qur'ān was authored in Arabic and is the book in which God revealed Himself to the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā 'Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*). The Arabic script allows for the development of a vast range of stunning forms. Although calligraphy was frequently combined with a talismanic element as an ornament, it had an unmistakable aesthetic appeal.

The numerous ways calligraphy is incorporated into the overall design of things from various ages and places demonstrate the creative possibilities of calligraphy as an ornament. In other cases, calligraphy may serve as the primary ornamental element. The author uses the Arabic script's built-in decorative features in these passages. Islamic calligraphy embellishment has always been the most distinctive way to recognise Islamic buildings. Mosques and other Islamic structures employ it. Numerous studies have been done on how Islamic art evolved from pre-existing traditional aspects and what kind of force brought all those components together to create a singular synthesis. Even with the variances in time and location, no one will contest the oneness of Islamic art and architecture.

Islam does not impose any specific types of art. It only limits the available vocabulary. Islam's ideology is based on both fixed and flexible ideas. Set refers to the essential tenets of Islam, such as the unity of Allah Almighty, which cannot be altered through time or space. In contrast, the variable depends on human perception in various locations. It is known as the intellectual viewpoint passed down through Islamic art.

The main reason calligraphy is used more frequently as an architectural ornament in Mughal architecture is that it avoids showing human and animal images in Islamic art and embellishment, which helps to eradicate any pagan-related components⁵⁶. The apostasy that assumed the form of idolatry was eradicated by Islam⁵⁷. This practice started to disappear as people learned more about Islam's principles. However, figural images persisted in many artistic

works, including wall paintings and sketches. Still, there were no depictions of people or animals on the Holy Qur'ān or mosques decoration⁵⁸. One of the most striking aspects of Islamic art is how little human depiction is valued. The necessity for increased human representation in Islamic art is overstated, even if there are examples of human figural renderings throughout early Islamic history.

Many religions use images of living things to represent their beliefs. Islam, however, restricts the use of living things' figures since it regards them as worldly and a kind of idolatry⁵⁹. Calligraphy was used increasingly for both writing and visual art. Islamic architecture greatly benefits from calligraphy as a kind of visual art. This is due to the clarity with which the Holy Qur'ān and the teachings of the last Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*), may be easily communicated. Muslims use calligraphy to reflect their faith and identity and to create beautiful works of decorative art. Muslim culture is replete with calligraphic inscriptions, which can be seen on the Holy Qur'ān, in mosques, madrasahs, libraries, mausoleums, cemeteries, and castles.

Safadi asserts that the widespread use of calligraphy demonstrates the significance of the written word in Islam. The most famous Islamic shrine, the Holy *Ka'bah*, as well as common household items, complete walls, mosque furniture, mosque interiors and exteriors, tombs, and other artifacts, are all prominently covered with lettering. But much like most other religions' iconography, the writing also conveys authority. Of course, its primary use is in writing the Holy Qur'ān's divine word, giving it tremendous strength and ultimate significance. Allah Almighty had selected Arabic as the medium for his final revelation out of all the possibilities in this universe.

Inscriptions on the mosques' internal and external walls frequently incorporate calligraphy. Mosques are places of worship in Islamic culture, and when they are inscribed, great care is taken⁶⁰. The Islamic building's architecture has minarets, calligraphy, central fountains, mihrabs, and iwans. On the windows, walls, and minarets are messages from the Holy Qur'ān referring to Allah Almighty, the Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*), and his sayings and teachings.



Figure 9: Frontal wall of Wazir Khan Mosque of the Mughal Era with Persian *Nast'aliq* Calligraphy

Islamic architecture exhibits patterns of grandeur that are concretizations of that pervasive aesthetic effort of Muslims to produce works of art that will inspire sentiments of spiritual transcendence in the beholder⁶¹. For instance, given that Islam holds that only one God has neither a beginning nor an end, the never-ending patterns that adorn Islamic artworks are meant to represent God's infinity⁶².

To sum up, Islamic architecture incorporated calligraphy heavily for two main reasons. The first justification started with the initial printing of the Holy Qur'ān. They would be a few meters long since the Holy Qur'ān would be inscribed incredibly finely⁶³. As a result, scribes started employing their calligraphy skills to mark verses from the Holy Qur'ān on the Mosque's walls. Islam forbade the worship of any visual representations, which significantly impacted the development of calligraphy in Islamic architecture. For example, the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque illustrates how calligraphy was created from visual images in Islamic architecture. When Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque, the interior decorations were appropriately ornamented with Arabic calligraphy and geometric tilework⁶⁴. The mosaics of the saints and angels were covered with calligraphic depictions of the name of Allah Almighty rather than literal human figure renderings.

10. Conclusion

Islamic scholars predominately study calligraphy, mainly Arabic calligraphy, and Muslim artists use it extensively. Islamic calligraphy is widely used in Islamic art and architecture and has evolved into one of the critical elements of Muslim buildings, particularly the mosque or masjid. Moreover, Persian calligraphy is one of the most renowned arts in Persian history and a firm representative of Persian culture. *Nasta'liq*, the Persian calligraphy style, has been used in a wide range of contexts and formats, including religious inscriptions on the mosque facades, the writing of the Holy Qur'ān and passages from sacred texts, poetry, and fiction, stereoplates or print clichés, and in the lithography, lineament, and layout of books and magazines and influenced the Mughals. The Mughal Empire is the “Golden Era” of the expansion of Persia and India’s bilateral relations since it was during this time that bilateral contacts between the two countries reached their apex in all sectors of life. In the 16th century, the Mughal dynasty strove to take control of India as the Safavid Empire grew in Persia. India and Persia both attained great strength under these dynasties, and there were many other facets to their interactions, such as politics, diplomacy, culture, literature, trade, and religion.

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