



BEAUTIFYING MOSQUES, ENHANCING WORSHIP: THE FIQH PERSPECTIVE OF FOUR MADHHABS AND MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S AESTHETIC CONCEPT

Mohamad Zakky Ubaid Ermawan

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

zakky.ubaid@gmail.com

Achmad Khudori Soleh

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

khudorisoleh@pps.uin-malang.ac.id

Mohammad Fadil Akbar Islamy

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

230104310016@student.uin-malang.ac.id

Abstract

Muslims recognize the significance of mosques as sites of worship and as centers for their religious and other activities. Various efforts are organized and designed to make mosques relevant to cultural changes and the needs of Muslims. Mosque buildings are often not identical in each region and nation, with different customs and cultures, and are sometimes even similar to other religions. In addition, the temptation of capitalism also raises questions about mosque designs that are overly grand and problematic for the socio-economic life of the community. This article aims to interrogate whether such a well-built mosque is permissible from the four madhhabs of fiqh and the aesthetics of Muhammad Iqbal. Thus, this research uses descriptive-interpretive and textual methods to scrutinize fiqh views and analyze Iqbal's aesthetic perspective on the mosque building. The study revealed that the four madhhabs allow decorations on mosque buildings so that the mosque remains the principal place of worship and does not inconvenience the solemnity of the congregation's prayers. Furthermore, the mosque's decora-



tion, ornamentation, design, and construction must provide meaningful objectives with practical usefulness and philosophical value; otherwise, for Iqbal, decorating a mosque in excess is wasteful and unavailing, and embellishing a mosque means squandering time and money.

Keywords: *Beautifying Mosques, Mosque Embellishments Muhammad Iqbal's Aesthetics, Fiqh Madhhab.*

Introduction

The existence of mosques cannot be separated from the lives of Muslims. Wherever Muslims live, there is almost certainly a mosque as a place for Muslims to worship and get closer to Allah. Apart from that, mosques are also religious institutions closely related to Muslims' spiritual, social, and cultural life. Thus, a mosque means a manifestation of the existence and ideals of Muslims, especially as a means of worship that plays a significant role in social life.

Today, many magnificent and beautiful mosques exist in most cities in Indonesia. The splendor of the mosque has become a religious symbol for the city's people. This assumes that the function and role of mosques have begun to shift. The mosque, initially a place to prostrate and worship, has become a tourist attraction.

Discussions about beautifying and building mosques from a fiqh perspective have been widely discussed in previous studies. However, they discuss mosques more from the perspective of Islamic aesthetics and mosque aesthetics concerning the socio-cultural and his-

torical aspects. Pratomo et al.,¹ Shahren,² Alimuddin and Aswar,³ Hendri,⁴ Khoiri,⁵ Mulyana and Fahmi,⁶ Masridin, and

¹ Gilang Pratomo, Kamal Abdullah Arif, and Enrico Nirwan Histanto, "Kajian Estetika Masjid Salman ITB Ditinjau dari Struktur," *Risa: Riset Arsitektur* 7, no. 2 (2023): 212-227, DOI: 10.26593/risa.v7i02.6607.212-227.

² Sohila Shahren, "Aesthetic Values of Islamic Ornament at al-Aqsa Mosque as an Input for the Development of Contemporary Decorative Designs," *Journal of Architecture, Art & Humanistic Science* 1, no. 1 (2016): 246-263, DOI: 10.12816/0036523.

³ Alimuddin and Aswar, "Design of Interior Estetic Elements of the Mosque Ornaments Based on Local Arivity of Bugis Tribe," *Proceeding of International Conference on Science and Advanced Technology (ICSAT), The 9th Edition* (2020): 1671-1685, <https://ojs.unm.ac.id/icsat/article/view/18908>.

⁴ Zulfi Hendri, "Unity in Diversity: Harmony in the Decoration of the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Purbalingga Mosque Buildings, Central Java, Indonesia," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Educational Research (IJM CER)* 4, Issue 3 (2022): 83-101, https://www.ijmcer.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/IJM CER_10430830101.pdf.

⁵ Miftahul Khoiri, "Masjid al-Ikhlās sebagai Pusat Budaya Keagamaan Islam Masyarakat Tempel, Caturtunggal, Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta," *JUSPI: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam* 3, no. 2 (2020): 195-203, DOI: 10.30829/juspi.v3i2.6390.

⁶ Yusup Mulyana and Rezza Fauzi Muham-

Ismail,⁷ for example, discuss the aesthetics of decoration and ornamentation of certain mosques about their symbolic and cultural aspects. Meanwhile, Said et al.,⁸ Putra and Rumondor,⁹ are more concerned with historical aspects and cultural heritage. Others, such as Erzen,¹⁰ Ahmed,¹¹ Mitias and al Jasmi,¹² discuss the mosque from its architectural aspect.

mad Fahmi, "Aesthetic the Grand Mosque of Cimahi," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 3, no. 1 (2023): 192-208, DOI: 10.15575/jra.v3i1.23516.

⁷ Mohd Hanif Masridin and Alice Sabrina Ismail, "Critical Regionalism Approach for Djami Mosque Design towards the Aesthetics of Sustainability," *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 7, no. 2 (2022): 220-232, DOI: 10.18860/jia.v7i2.17135.

⁸ Said, Samia Chergui, Mustapha Cheikh Zouaoui, "An Assessment of the Aesthetic Value of the Islamic University Mosque in Constantine," *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 5, no. 3 (2019): 119-128, DOI: 10.18860/jia.v5i3.4622.

⁹ Ahmad Putra and Prasetio Rumondor, "Eksistensi Masjid di Era Rasulullah dan Era Millennial," *Tasamuh* 17, no. 1 (2019): 245-264, DOI: 10.20414/tasamuh.v17i1.1218.

¹⁰ Jale Nejdert Erzen, "Reading Mosques: Meaning and Architecture in Islam," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (2011): 125-131, DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6245.2010.01453.x.

¹¹ Hatem Ahmed, "Utilizing Islamic Geometric Abstraction Aesthetics in Creating Designs for Mosque Architectural Decoration," *International Design Journal* 12, Issue 5 (2022): 302-291, DOI:10.21608/idj.2022.261006.

¹² Michael H. Mitias and Abdullah Al Jasmi, "Form and Function in the Congregational Mosque," *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 55, Issue: 1 (2018): 25-44, DOI: 10.33134/eeja.169.

Therefore, this article analyzes the mosque from Iqbal's aesthetic and the fiqh views of the four Sunni Madhhabs.

At the same time, the philosophy of art questions a work of art, art object, or art artifact.¹³ Based on Muhammad Iqbal's aesthetic concept, this study analyzes problems related to beautifying mosque buildings and artistic aesthetics. In this way, it will provide a new perspective in the academic world and, of course, studies on the theme of religion in examining the beauty and splendor of mosques in Indonesia.

Mosque: Functions and Aesthetic Perspective

When referring to the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his friends, the mosque became the base of Muslim activity. At that time, the Prophet fostered his friends, who would become the strongest and best cadres of the early generation of Muslims to lead, maintain, and inherit the teachings of religion and Islamic civilization, which started from the mosque. Moreover, various activities and problems of the people relating to religion, war tactics, science, social politics, and socio-culture are also discussed and resolved at the mosque. So, at that time, the mosque became a center for the development of Islamic culture, a means of critical discussion, reciting the Qur'an,

¹³ Yakob Sumarjo, *Filsafat Seni* (Bandung: Penerbit ITB, 2000).

and deepening religious knowledge in general.¹⁴

Today, the function of mosques has changed from the function of mosques during the time of the Prophet. However, it still has something to do with what the Prophet did with his followers in the mosque. The mosque is also filled with educational activities with an Islamic education background, such as the Qur'an Education School (TPA), recitations, and a library. It illustrates that mosques in the millennial era are still places for preaching to Muslims and places for discussions between people. The mosque is also used to hold wedding ceremonies and collect alms and *zakah*.

What is also interesting about mosques in the current millennial era is the changes and developments in the components of the mosque itself, such as a pleasant and comfortable space for group prayers, a lovely and attractive pulpit, a clear Qibla direction, a clean and comfortable place for ablution, the tower functions to call the congregation to prayer. It is equipped with decorations that amaze the congregation with the charm of the mosque building.¹⁵

¹⁴ Putra and Rumondor, "Eksistensi Masjid di Era Rasulullah dan Era Millennial," 247.

¹⁵ Aisyah Nur Handryant, *Masjid sebagai Pusat Pengembangan Masyarakat: Integrasi Konsep Habluminallah, Habluminnas, dan Habluminalalam* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2010), 59.

Beautifying a mosque building needs to be done to make the mosque prosperous. Mosques must constantly be guarded and well cared for because mosques belong to Allah. It means that the mosque is always kept clean and the building beautified.¹⁶ If a mosque looks dirty, not beautiful, smells terrible, and seems unkempt, of course, the mosque will be empty of worshipers, and ultimately, the mosque will not be prosperous.

Apart from beautifying the mosque building, the prosperity of the mosque is also greatly influenced by the members of the mosque management (*takmir*). Without a solid *takmir*, the mosque is almost empty of all worship activities. If the mosque is beautiful and magnificent, but if no *takmir* always tries to take care of the mosque, such as having a five-time prayer schedule for the imam and cleaning the mosque, then the mosque cannot be considered prosperous. In other words, beautifying the mosque building is only a plus point in making the mosque prosperous, which can be done if the mosque already has consistent religious activities and is always cleaned daily.

As for the opinion that beautifying the mosque building will shift the function of the mosque from being a sacred

¹⁶ Ministry of Waqf Government of Kuwait, *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah*, Vol. 37 (Kuwait: Ministry of Waqf Government of Kuwait, 1980), 197.

place to a public place, then this will not be a problem. Because, in essence, the actual function of the mosque can be determined by the *takmir*. Suppose a mosque is a public place, as a destination for people who visit, take photos, or prove its beauty or fame. In that case, the mosque can increase the attraction of people or congregations who take part in religious activities that the *takmir* has programmed. However, beautifying mosque buildings must be done in a way that Islamic Sharia justifies.

Muhammad Iqbal's Aesthetic on Beautifying Mosques

In Muhammad Iqbal's view, the content of all art is emotion, will, sensation, feeling, sentiment, and ideas.¹⁷ Therefore, art is not just intellectual ideas or forms of beauty. However, art is something that is born based on full emotional content that is capable of shaking the human heart. Art that is not like that is like a fire that has been extinguished.¹⁸ Examining that idea of art in a discussion of the philosophy of art shows indications of functional aims in the sense that art has specific goals and objectives.¹⁹

¹⁷ Dini Kusumandari Lubis, "Hakekat Manusia Menurut Muhammad Iqbal dan Kahlil Gibran," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Theosofi dan Peradaban Islam* 4, no. 1 (2022): 119, DOI: 10.51900/alhikmah.v4i1.12535.

¹⁸ A. Khudori Soleh, "Konsep Seni dan Keindahan M. Iqbal," *El-Harakah* 10, no. 1 (2008): 10, DOI: 10.18860/el.v10i1.4595.

¹⁹ Ahmad Pattiroy, "Gagasan tentang Seni

In general, art consists of a social function and an aesthetic function.²⁰ The first function looks at the involvement of art with social, economic, political, educational, moral, religious life, and so on. Meanwhile, the second function is to see the relationship between art and its appearance, which provides enjoyment and pleasure for the viewer. However, for Iqbal, pleasure is only a consequence, not a goal.²¹ Apart from its social function, Iqbal's ideas about art also show expressionistic thinking.²² In this way, expression (disclosure) takes the form of imaginary images that occur entirely in the artist's mind. At the same time, the resulting work of art is only a reproduction of what the artist experiences within himself.

Starting from the description of art theory applied to Iqbal's artistic thinking above, it is concluded that on the one hand, Iqbal places art under consideration of social functions and, on the other hand, considers it an expression of the artist's self. As a social function, for him, nothing can be called true art, no matter how expressive the artist's personality, unless it creates brilliant values and new hopes for improving human life and society. As an expression of the artist's

Islam Sisi Falsafah Muhamad Iqbal," *Hermeenia* 4, no. 2 (2005): 12, <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/8472/>.

²⁰ Pattiroy, 12.

²¹ Pattiroy, 14.

²² Pattiroy, 15.

personality, whatever the content of that personality, it is an actual work of art. In this sense, functionalism and expressionism cannot be separated in Iqbal's artistic thinking, as is the subject-object relationship in his thinking about beauty. For him, the essence of art and the aesthetics of art is an expression of the artist's personality, which generates a spirit of achievement in life. According to Iqbal, aesthetics is not art that can only have a happy effect on the viewer.

Art in Islam has developed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, as seen in the architectural art of the Nabawi mosque. However, it is not as beautiful and majestic as today's mosques.²³ As previously discussed, the function of mosques during the time of the Prophet. Nowadays, there are differences. The role of mosques today is not as much as during the time of the Prophet. Mosques are only used for religious activities. It can be noticed from the number of mosques that are only used as places of worship and religious learning. Other community activities began to be moved to other places. Some mosques are only opened during prayer time and then locked again after prayer time has passed

²³ Muhammad Riduwan Masykur and Achmad Khudori Soleh, "Seni Pegelaran Wayang Dalam Perspektif Fikih dan Spiritualitas Seni Islam Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Muslim Heritage* 8, no. 1 (2023): 107, DOI: 10.21154/muslimheritage.v8i1.5985.

and at night.²⁴

In Iqbal's aesthetic concept, something can be aesthetic if there are two elements: function and expression. The function element is that the work of art can provide a function that involves social, economic, political, educational, moral, religious life, and others. Meanwhile, the element of expression is that the work of art expresses what the artist who created the work feels. Regarding the beautification of mosque buildings, it has a social and religious function. With the beauty of the mosque building, the mosque will become famous, and many people will be curious to see the beauty of the mosque. It also demonstrates that Islam is great because its places of worship are lovely. In this way, the artist's expression is also conveyed. The artist wants to convey the majesty of Islam through the beauty of the Islamic place of worship itself. So, in Iqbal's concept, beautifying a mosque building is an actual work of art.

However, there is a concern: if the mosque is built too grand and beautiful, will the function and role of the mosque change? It was originally a sacred place for worship but turned into a "tourist attraction." People only come to see the mosque's beauty, not to worship in the mosque. It will not be a problem as long

²⁴ Saefu Zaman, "Pemaknaan Ruang pada Masjid Kubah Emas: Kajian Semiotik Ruang," *Paradigma, Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 7, no. 2 (2018): 179, DOI: 10.17510/paradigma.v7i2.171.

as people still use the mosque as a place of worship. Moreover, during the time of the Prophet, the mosque was not just a place of worship but a place for political arguments, a place to discuss war tactics, a resting place for travelers, and a place for friendship between people and others.

The rules that need to be considered are ensuring that the mosque maintains its holiness; no one is allowed to bring filth (*najis*) items into the mosque. Furthermore, it is forbidden for unmarried men and women to date in this beautiful mosque. In essence, entering a mosque has etiquette; for example, when entering a mosque, put your right foot first while praying:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

Or another prayer like that.

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَدْخِلْنِي فِيهَا
وَأَعِزَّنِي مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ جِئْتُ لَأُؤَدِّيَ
فَرَضَكَ وَأَطْلُبُ رَحْمَتَكَ وَاللِّتِمَسَّ رِضَاكَ

It is also recommended to pray *tahiyat al-masjid* and leave the mosque with your left foot first.²⁵

Fiqh Discussion on Beautifying Mosques

From a Fiqh perspective, spending *waqf* money (or money not explic-

²⁵ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah*, Vol. 37, 199.

itly intended for mosque decoration by donors) to beautify mosque buildings according to the Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafi'i maddhabs is prohibited (*haram*).²⁶ In a history from the Shafi'is, it is explained that if the mosque's cash is too much (surplus) and efforts are needed to make the congregation feel at home in the mosque, which can be achieved by decorating the mosque, then that is permissible. Even if it is necessary to build a mosque tower, using the mosque's surplus cash is also permissible. This ability has conditions. The condition of the people around the mosque must first be considered so that no one struggles to survive and that the decorations and towers are necessary. The expenditure on these decorations and towers must be at most half the remaining cash.²⁷

If *waqf* funds are not used, according to Hanafi madhhab, it is permissible to decorate or beautify the mosque building, as long as the walls being decorated do not face the direction of the *qibla*. Decorating the walls of the *qibla* is *makruh* (a disliked act) because it can disturb the devotion of the praying congregation. Primarily, if the decoration uses gold, Hanafis argues that decorating using gold is an act that wastes wealth, and channeling this wealth to other parties who

²⁶ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah*, Vol. 11, 275.

²⁷ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah*, Vol. 37, 204.

need it more is considered more important than decorating a mosque. Hanafis also does not recommend carving or writing verses from the Qur'an on mosque walls for fear of them falling and being trampled on.²⁸

According to Shafi'i madhhab, it is *makruh* to carve a mosque with gold and silver and carve verses from the Qur'an on the mosque's walls. However, some Shafi'i's scholars allow writing verses from the Qur'an on the *qibla* walls of mosques.²⁹

Maliki madhhab believes that it is *makruh* to decorate a mosque's walls, ceiling, and curtains with gold, silver, or similar jewelry if the room is used for people to pray. It is permissible and not *makruh* if it is not used for prayer. Maliki also made it *makruh* to write carvings on the walls of the *qibla*.³⁰

Hanbali madhhab forbids decorating mosques with gold and silver. If there is, then the gold and silver must be released. Hanbalis also forbids all forms of decoration, such as carvings, coloring (which is very colorful), and so on, if these decora-

tions often cause the congregation to lose their devotion when praying.³¹

Conclusion

From the explanation regarding decorating and beautifying mosque buildings from each of the four schools of thought, it can be concluded that it is permissible as long as it does not disturb the prayer congregation and make the congregation lose their solemnity. Apart from that, several things need to be considered: the source of funds for mosque decoration is funds intended explicitly for mosque decoration. Also, pay attention to the condition of the community around the mosque and the ability of the mosque takmir's funds. A mosque with magnificent decorations is nothing compared to helping the people around the mosque who are still in trouble. According to Muhammad Iqbal's aesthetic concept, if decoration cannot achieve meaningful objectives, then the decoration is not decoration. In other words, it is a waste of money to decorate a mosque excessively, which is wasteful and unavailing.

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²⁸ Muhammad Amin al-Syahir ibn Abidin, *Qurratu 'Uyun al-Akhyar: Takmilatu Radd al-Mukhtar 'ala al-Dur al-Mukhtar Syarhu Tanwiru al-Abshar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1992), Vol. 1: 442, shamela.ws/book/918.

²⁹ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyah al-Kuwaitiyah*, Vol. 37: 204.

³⁰ Muhammad al-Dasuqi, *Hasyiat ad-Dasuqi 'ala al-Syarh al-Kabir* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1998), Vol. 1: 442, [https://shamela.ws/book/21604](http://shamela.ws/book/21604).

³¹ Mansour Idris al-Hanbali, *Kasysyaf al-Qina' 'an Matni al-Iqna'* (Riyadh: Maktabat an-Nashr al-Haditsat, 1968), Vol. 2: 366, [https://shamela.ws/book/21642](http://shamela.ws/book/21642).

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