Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 107 (1) Regular Issue (2026)

Poetry and Religion: A Comprehensive Analysis of Islamic Thought from the Classical to the Modern Era

Arief Marizki Purba*
Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
Universitas Sumatera Utara
Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20222, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: ariefmp@usu.ac.id
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4044-2519

Rumyeni
Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
Universitas Riau
Pekanbaru, Riau 28293, Indonesia
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5208-4128

https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.107.30

Abstract

This research investigates the intricate and multifaceted links of poetry and religion within Islamic civilisation throughout history. Diwan al-'Arab, poetry as we know it, underwent profound changes, especially with the advent of Islam which placed new ethical and theological parameters with which to frame it. This research adopts a qualitative literature approach. The findings of the research highlight three significant periods: (1) Islam's reorientation of poetry from celebratory tribal pride ('asabiyyah) towards the ideals of tawhid; (2) the Sufi masters Jalaluddin Rumi, Mansur al-Hallaj, and others, whose poetry expressed divine love and the mystery of the unitive life; and (3) the modern iqtibas of Muhammad Iqbal, who viewed poetry as philosophical and reformative within the broader framework of his notion of Khudi (the self). This research observes poetry in Islam as a form of aesthetic expression greatly politicised, especially in the later periods, as well as capturing with incredible fluency the unending struggles of the soul defending and negotiating within the confines of art and civilisation. Islamic thought, as revealed, mystified, and wedded with modern complexity through the transcendental eloquence of beauty and thought, the survivability of this civilisation mystified.

Keywords: Poetry, Religion, Islam, Sufism, Iqbal, Civilization.

Introduction

Poetry occupies a central yet paradoxical position in Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition. On the one hand, it represents the pinnacle of pre-Islamic Arab aesthetic and cultural achievement (Borg, 2015). Known as Diwan al-'Arab (the register or archive of the Arab people), poetry serves as a vessel for preserving the history, genealogy, tribal pride, and value system of Jahiliyyah society. Poets at that time held an almost sacred status, respected as guardians of oral tradition and spokespeople for their people, capable of elevating or demeaning the dignity of a tribe through the power of their words. Social, political, and cultural life revolved around this poetic institution, making it the foundation of their collective identity (Shamsuddin, 2022).

On the other hand, the arrival of Islam brought sharp theological criticism and challenged the hegemony of poetry. The holy text of the Qur'an, particularly Surah Asy-Syu'ara', explicitly condemns poets who are "followed by misguided people" and "wander in every valley, and... say what they themselves do not do". This initial tension between divine revelation and poetic

tradition became the starting point for a complex discourse on the status, function, and legitimacy of poetry within the framework of Islamic thought (Osman, 2014).

However, this interaction was not a total rejection, but rather a dynamic process of negotiation, adaptation, and transformation. Islam did not abolish poetry, but gradually "Islamised" it, shifting its thematic focus from tribal pride ('asabiyyah) to tawhid, from physical descriptions and hedonism to ethical and spiritual contemplation. This reorientation process gave birth to a new poetic tradition that was extremely rich and diverse (Bano & Bano, 2022). Poetry, which was initially a tool of tribal propaganda, was transformed into a medium of da'wah in the early days of Islam, then developed into the primary language for expressing divine love (mahabbah) and indescribable mystical experiences (ma'rifat) in the Sufi tradition, and was ultimately used as a manifesto for the revival and reform of civilisation in the modern era. Based on this background, this study specifically aims to answer the following questions: How did Islamic thought, in its various manifestations (law, mysticism, and modernism), dialectically shape and be shaped by the medium of poetry? How did poetry function as an arena for contestation and articulation of fundamental religious ideas from time to time? (Warits et al., 2023).

This article argues that the evolution of poetry in Islamic thought reflects the trajectory of Islamic civilisation itself: from the formation of a communal identity based on revelation, to the deepening of esoteric individual spiritual experiences, to collective responses to the challenges of modernity. Poetry, thus, functions as a seismograph that records the theological, spiritual, and intellectual vibrations at the heart of the Islamic world (Aveling, 2014). To prove this thesis, the analysis will be divided into three main sections. The first section will examine the historical and jurisprudential foundations of poetry in early Islam, tracing the dialectic between the Jahiliyyah heritage and the new norms introduced by the Qur'an and Hadith. The second part will delve into the use of poetry as the primary language in the Sufi tradition through case studies of the works of Jalaluddin Rumi, which represent the path of love (mahabbah), and Mansur Al-Hallaj, which represent the experience of self-annihilation (fana'). The third part will explore the role of poetry as a tool for reform and revival in the modernist thought of Muhammad Iqbal, who consciously transformed poetry into a medium of philosophy of action (Stepien, 2013).

Literature Review

Studies on the relationship between poetry and religion within the Islamic context have yielded a substantial body of literature. Various studies have explored specific aspects of this interaction, often with a concentrated focus on a particular period, figure, or theme (Doğan, 2023). A large number of studies, for example, have been dedicated to analysing the religious and Sufi dimensions in the poems of prominent poets such as Taufiq Ismail, Amir Hamzah, and Emha Ainun Najib, examining how the relationship between humans and God is expressed implicitly and explicitly in their works (Aveling, 2014). Similarly, the influence of the Qur'an and Hadith as sources of morality and ethics in shaping Arabic literature has been a significant subject of analysis, highlighting the role of literature as a medium for disseminating Islamic teachings (Boayo, 2015).

In particular, Sufi poetry has attracted widespread academic attention. Sufi poetry profoundly develops the language of divine love (ishq) and self-annihilation (fana) by portraying ishq as an intense, all-consuming passion for the Divine that goes beyond ordinary love, symbolized through metaphors of burning, intoxication, and union. This love drives the seeker toward self-purification and the dissolution of the ego, known as fana, where the individual self disappears into the Divine presence, leading to spiritual subsistence (baqa) in God. These themes reflect classical Sufi theological-literary traditions, where ishq and fana represent the mystic's journey of ecstatic love and ultimate union with the Divine, exemplified in the works of poets like ʿAttar, Hamzah Fansuri, and Rabia al-Basri. This poetic language captures the mystical path of divine

love and self-transcendence central to Sufi spirituality (Lewisohn, 2017). Analyses of Jalaluddin Rumi's works, for example, often focus on identifying religious aspects such as aqidah, sharia, and ihsan, as well as the use of metaphors and figurative language to convey profound spiritual experiences. On the other hand, the controversial Sufi thinker Mansur Al-Hallaj, particularly his concept of hulul, has also been extensively studied, although often from a theological and historical perspective rather than a direct poetic analysis. In the modern context, Muhammad Iqbal's thoughts on the philosophy of Khudi (self) and its role in the revival of Islam have been the subject of countless studies, examining how he utilised poetry as a vehicle for his philosophical ideas (Noorani, 2014).

Although these studies provide valuable insights, they tend to operate in thematic or periodical silos. Analyses of Rumi's poetry are rarely directly linked to the fiqh debates about poetry in early Islam, and explorations of Iqbal's poetic philosophy are often separated from the roots of the Sufi poetic tradition that he both criticises and inherits. Historically, the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali Sunni schools, along with the Imamiyya (Shia), have analyzed poetry's permissibility, generally allowing it if free of immorality or excess while censuring obscene or distracting content, based on Prophetic hadiths. Hanbali scholars proved most cautious, prioritizing strict textual adherence, whereas Hanafi approaches showed greater flexibility via analogy (qiyas). Over time, rulings softened with Sufi influences, increasingly permitting spiritual poetry despite early debates (Talab, 2024). The gap that this research seeks to fill is the lack of a synthetic analysis that traces the continuities and discontinuities in poetic function and meaning throughout the broad history of Islamic thought (Leaman, 2010). This study seeks not only to analyse each period separately, but also to connect these crucial points—from fiqh regulations in the classical era, spiritual sublimation in Sufism, to reformist instrumentalisation in the modern era. Thus, this study aims to present a more coherent and integrated narrative of the role of poetry as a central and constantly evolving intellectual and spiritual medium in Islamic civilisation (Borg, 2015).

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a literature review design (library research) (Rahman & Mohezar, 2020). This approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is to describe, analyse, and interpret in depth the phenomena of thought, belief, and perception contained in historical and literary texts (Seebohm, 2015). The nature of this research is descriptive-analytical, which aims to provide a clear, objective, and systematic description of the evolution of the role of poetry in Islamic thought. The primary and secondary sources of data for this research are primary and secondary sources (Royani et al., 2022). Primary data sources include translations of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as representative poetic works by the key figures analysed, namely Jalaluddin Rumi, Mansur Al-Hallaj, and Muhammad Iqbal. Secondary data sources include various relevant academic literature, such as scientific journal articles, reference books, research reports, and dissertations, which discuss the history of Arabic literature, Islamic law on poetry, Sufism, and modern Islamic thought.

Data collection techniques were carried out through systematic searching and recording from various identified literature sources. This process involved identifying relevant sources, collecting textual data, and careful documentation to ensure the validity and reliability of the information (Schlickel, 2012). Data analysis was conducted using critical thematic analysis methods. This process was interactive and ongoing, involving several stages. First, the collected data were reduced and classified based on period and school of thought (classical-fiqh, Sufism, and modernism). Second, key themes that appeared repeatedly in the literature were identified, such as legitimacy, divine love, self-merging, and the rise of civilisation. Third, critical interpretation is carried out to analyse how each school of thought utilises and interprets poetry, as well as to examine the dialectical and causal relationships between different periods. This analysis not only summarises the literature but also synthesises information to draw new coherent conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Initial Dialectic: Poetry between Jahiliyah Heritage and Islamic Norms

Before the arrival of Islam, poetry was not merely a form of entertainment, but a central institution that supported the social and political structure of Jahiliyyah Arab society. It functioned as a collective archive—a Diwan al-'Arab—that recorded genealogies, chronicled significant events, preserved the legacy of clans, and fostered the spirit of heroism (Borg, 2015). In a culture dominated by oral tradition, poets held a position of great honour, equivalent to that of tribal leaders or war heroes. They were the guardians of history, spokespersons for the community, and agents of propaganda whose ability to string words together could determine the reputation of a tribe (Ilham, 2022). The main themes of Jahiliyah poetry accurately reflect the harsh reality of desert life and are centred on tribal values (Huwaida, 2022). These themes include: fakhr (pride in one's tribe and oneself), hamasah (praise for bravery in battle), ghazal (descriptions of love and the beauty of women), ritsa' (lamentations over the death of a prominent figure), wasf (descriptions of nature and animals), and hija' (sharp mockery of enemy tribes). Poetry in this era was a reflection of a worldview oriented towards worldly honour, tribal loyalty ('asabiyyah), and an endless cycle of war and peace. Poetry was their weapon, archive, and crown of pride (Ilham, 2022).

The arrival of Islam, with the Qur'an as its primary sacred text, fundamentally challenged the hegemony of poetry and shifted the centre of gravity of Arab culture. The Qur'an itself, with its unparalleled linguistic beauty and depth of meaning (i'jaz al-lughawi), surpassed all forms of poetic expression known at the time, silencing even the most accomplished poets (Osman, 2014). This challenge was both theological and aesthetically oriented. Theologically, the Qur'an launched a direct criticism of the practice of poetry through Surah Asy-Syu'ara': 224-227. These verses state that "misguided people follow the poets" and they tend to "say what they do not do". However, this criticism is not absolute. Verse 227 provides a crucial exception: "except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds". It is this exception that opens the door to theological legitimacy for Islamic poetry, specifically poetry that aligns with the values of faith and virtue (Vasalou, 2002).

The Prophet Muhammad's attitude towards poetry also reveals the same ambivalence, clarifying the distinguishing criteria between despicable and praiseworthy poetry (Al-Olaqi, 2016). On the one hand, he strongly criticised poetry dominated by lies or negligence, as reflected in the famous hadith: "Indeed, the stomach of one of you filled with pus... is better than a stomach filled with poetry." However, he explicitly praised poetry that contained wisdom and truth, saying, "Indeed, among (the verses) of poetry there is wisdom (Abdul-Razaq, 2023)." Moreover, the Prophet even utilised the power of poetry for the sake of da'wah and the defence of Islam, by having "official" poets such as Hassan bin Thabit, who was tasked with responding to the poetic attacks of the polytheists.

Fiqh Formulation: Requirements and Restrictions of Islamic Poetry

Based on the theological foundations of the Qur'an and precedents from the Hadith, Islamic scholars formulated a legal framework governing the permissibility of poetry (Talab, 2024). The conclusion of the ijma (consensus) of scholars is that poetry itself is essentially neutral (mubah); its ruling depends entirely on its content, purpose, and impact. Poetry becomes praiseworthy (mahmud) and even recommended if it is used as a means to spread Islamic beliefs, encourage noble morals, defend the truth, or contain profound wisdom (Osman, 2014). Conversely, it becomes blameworthy (madzmum) and prohibited if it contains falsehood, slander, incitement to sin, praise of injustice, or if it is done to such an extent that it distracts a person from their obligations to worship and remember Allah (Al-Atawneh, 2012).

Islam's intervention in the institution of poetry, when analysed more deeply, is not merely an act of artistic censorship. Islam's intervention in poetry transcended artistic censorship by reforming pre-Islamic traditions to promote virtue and faith, per Qur'anic nuance (26:224-227) and Prophetic approvals, via self-regulation and ethical alignment rather than suppression. It is an ethical-teleological revolution. Islam does not seek to destroy the poetic medium that is so deeply rooted in Arab culture. Instead, Islam co-opts and reorients it (Borg, 2015). The extraordinary socio-political power of poetry is recognised, but its direction is diverted. Its purpose (maqasid) is fundamentally changed. The aesthetics that were initially built on the foundation of tribal pride ('asabiyyah) are replaced with aesthetics based on tawhid. The glory that is worshipped is no longer the glory of the tribe, but the majesty of God. Poetry was no longer a weapon for personal ridicule but a shield to defend the community of faith. Thus, Islam succeeded in transforming the most powerful cultural medium of its time into a tool for building a new civilisation.

Once the legal and ethical foundations of poetry had been established, Islamic tradition witnessed the evolution of poetry's function to a deeper and more personal level, especially in the realm of Sufism (Osman, 2014). For Sufis, the propositional language of fiqh and theology (kalam) often feels inadequate to capture and articulate mystical experiences (dzawq, ma'rifat) that are direct, intuitive, and transcend the boundaries of rationality. In this context, poetry, with its symbolic, metaphorical language laden with ambiguity, became an essential medium. It became the language of the heart (lisan al-qalb), the only vehicle capable of hinting at an indescribable spiritual experience.

The Language of Longing: Jalaluddin Rumi's "Bamboo Flute" Metaphor

Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) stands as the pinnacle of the Sufi poetry tradition. His work, especially the Masnavi, is one of the most influential texts in the Islamic world after the Qur'an (Rumi, 2010). The opening poem of the Masnavi, known as "The Song of the Bamboo Flute" (Nāy-nāma), succinctly summarises Rumi's entire philosophy of longing. In this poem, the flute serves as the primary metaphor for the human soul. It moans and emits a sad melody because it has been "torn from its former lush grove (Arberry, 2013)". The bamboo grove is a symbol of the divine realm, the true origin of the soul. Thus, the moaning of the flute is a poetic expression of the eternal longing (syawq) of the human soul, which is alienated in the material world, to reunite with its Beloved, namely God (Papan-Matin, 2003).

Rumi emphasises that the sound of this flute does not come from the ordinary blowing of the wind, but from the "fire of love" ('isyq) that burns within it. It is this divine love that drives the entire cosmos and is the source of all spiritual seeking (Chittick, 2014). Rumi's poems, rich in metaphors of universal love, natural beauty, and the unity of being (wahdat al-wujud), transcend rigid doctrinal boundaries. This has made him widely accepted not only in the Islamic world but also in the West, making him the most globally recognised and influential Sufi figure to date (Gupta, 2023). Suppose Rumi represents the face of Sufism, which is full of love and beauty. In that case, Mansur Al-Hallaj (d. 922) represents another equally important pole: the ecstatic experience of radical and often surprising self-annihilation (fana') (Wilcox, 2011). His most famous statement, "Ana al-Haq" (I am the Absolute Truth), is not an ontological claim that he is God, but rather a syatahat—a theophatic utterance that comes from the mouth of a Sufi in a state of deep mystical consciousness, where his individual consciousness has disappeared into Divine consciousness.

Al-Hallaj used poetry to explain this experience. In his poems, he described the concept of hulul (God taking place) not as physical incarnation, but as the union of two attributes: lahut (the divine aspect) and nasut (the human aspect). He wrote: "I am the One I love, and the One I love is me / We are two souls occupying one body (Ramli, 2013)". This is a phenomenological description of an experience in which human subjectivity disappears, and the one speaking through the sufi's mouth is "Al-Haq" itself. The tragedy of Al-Hallaj's execution became an

eternal symbol of the clash between esoteric (inner) mystical experience and the demands of exoteric (outer) Sharia law, a dialectic that continues to echo throughout the history of Sufi thought (Ramli, 2013). Although Rumi's and Al-Hallaj's poetic expressions appear very different—one embraces beauty, the other surprises with paradoxes—both actually represent two complementary modes or stages in the Sufi spiritual path. Both can be understood through the concept of Asmaul Husna, which refers to the attributes of God, divided into the attributes of Beauty (Jamal) and Majesty (Jalal) (Seyed-Gohrab, 2020).

Rumi's poetry is a manifestation of his experience of God's beauty. He draws seekers through metaphors of love (al-Wadud), compassion (ar-Rahman), and beauty. His path is one of inclusive and universal mahabbah (love), which explains its global appeal. In contrast, Al-Hallaj's poetry and sayings are a manifestation of the experience of God's Jalal (Boostani, 2017). He "destroys" and obliterates normal consciousness through paradoxes and ecstatic claims that challenge common sense. His path is one of radical fana' (melting). Rumi describes the beauty of the journey towards God, while Al-Hallaj describes the powerful experience at the point of arrival that obliterates the traveller. Both are faces of the same spiritual experience, seen from two different perspectives, and both affirm the central role of poetry as the only language capable of approaching the divine mystery (Khan, 2017).

The Philosophy of Khudi Muhammad Iqbal: Building the "Self" Through Poetic Power

Entering the 19th and 20th centuries, the Islamic world was faced with the challenges of modernity, colonialism, and internal decline. In response, a renewal movement (tajdid) emerged that sought to revitalise Islamic civilisation (Kamali, 2018). In this context, poetry once again transformed function. It was no longer merely a medium for personal spiritual expression, but also a powerful instrument for socio-political awakening and intellectual reform. A central figure in this transformation was Sir Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) (Umar, 2013).

Muhammad Iqbal, a poet-philosopher, consciously used poetry not for passive mystical contemplation, but as a medium for spreading the philosophy of action (amal). Critics of Iqbal's philosophy, as in previous studies, debate his concept of khudi (selfhood) because it prioritises individualism over communal harmony, echoes fascist tendencies, and is overly anti-Sufi despite its roots in poetry. Others criticise his poetry as narrow, disconnected from reality, and regressive, prioritising escapism amid social issues such as poverty, with metaphors that are considered incoherent or overly masculine. This debate highlights the tension between his activist vision and perceived elitism or political ambiguity (Yasir et al., 2020). His monumental poetic-philosophical work, Asrar-i-Khudi (Secrets of the Self), is a stirring call to awaken the Khudi—a concept that can be translated as ego, self, or a strong, creative, dynamic personality that is aware of its noble potential as God's representative (khalifah) on earth. Iqbal viewed khudi as a dynamic force progressing toward divine vicegerency on earth through moral and spiritual growth, rejecting pantheistic dissolution as promoting inaction. This concept draws from Quranic human potential but critiques Sufi passivity influenced by Vedanta (Iqbal, 1920; Arroisi & Qorib, 2023).

According to Iqbal, the purpose of human creation is to develop and strengthen this Khudi until it reaches the level of "Perfect Human" (Insan Kamil). This ideal human being is not a hermit who flees from the world, but rather an individual who actively conquers and shapes reality in accordance with the values of tawhid (Ahmad et al., 2023). Iqbal identifies factors that can strengthen Khudi, such as active and transformative love ('isyq), courage, independence (faqr), and lawful endeavour. Conversely, factors that weaken it are fear, begging or dependence (both material and intellectual), and slavery in all its forms. Poetry became Iqbal's primary vehicle for instilling these values into the hearts of the people (Muzaffar, 2002).

Iqbal's project calls for a critical re-evaluation of the Islamic tradition. He launches a sharp critique of the type of Sufism that teaches self-negation (nafy-i khudi) and total passivity, which

he considers to be one of the leading causes of the stagnation and decline of Islamic civilisation (Rahim, 2015). For him, true Sufism should strengthen, not weaken, the Khudi. At the same time, Iqbal also firmly rejects the Western idea of art, "art for art's sake" (l'art pour l'art), which separates aesthetics from ethics and life goals. For him, art, including poetry, must have a clear function and purpose: "art for life's sake". Poetry that only pursues formal beauty without inspiring the spirit of life, strength, and hope, he called a "message of death" and an opiate that lulls the soul (Muzaffar, 2002).

Poetry as "Prophetic Heritage": A Medium for Social and Political Reform

As for Iqbal, the true poet has a different and elevated purpose, for he is an 'heir to the prophets' (waratsatul anbiya'). As the prophets were bestowed with revelations to direct and transform society, poets draw inspiration from their muses to uplift the spirit and consciousness of a nation (Junid, 2002). With this outlook in mind, Iqbal redefined poetry from a form of mere artistic expression to a political and reformational clarion. He wrote with such passion that his poems served as a direct source of inspiration to the Muslim independence movement in the Indian subcontinent, which eventually led to the formation of Pakistan. In this way, he earned himself the title 'Spiritual Father of Pakistan' and, for the first time in modern Islamic history, it became clear how poetry could bring about monumental socio-political change (Mohomed, 2014).

The dialectical synthesis of Iqbal's poetic traditions can be understood in various ways. Setting aside the period in which Iqbal lived and focusing only on the poetry he encountered, we can confidently assert that he synthesised the force, spirit, and zeal that specific Jahili poetic works contained and coupled them with the depth of 'ishq and spiritual insight that Rumi, his beloved Sufi teacher and spiritual guru, gifted him (Nejad, 2022). Iqbal, however, took issue with certain aspects of the later Sufi traditions, which enveloped the depth of spiritual love in passivity and fatalism. With these quintessential elements, he then added Western philosophical ideas of vitalism and existentialism to create something novel. The result exuded poetry that not only made Rumi's love active in relation to the outside world, moving beyond idle inner contemplation, but also realigned the zeal of the Jahili poetry spirit toward civilisational jihad rather than tribal warfare. Iqbal, then, becomes an intellectual bridge that connects the legacy of the past and the realities of the present to the future of the Islamic civilisation he envisioned (Popp, 2019).

Iqbal believed poets to be the heirs of a prophetic duty, with the ethical and spiritual charge of inspiring a people's consciousness (Nadwi, 2022). In his view, the true poets were not mere creators of beauty, but also the infusers of truth and social change (Rahim, 2015). For Iqbal, poetry was the means of inspiring the soul, liberating people from stagnation, and rekindling the flame of courage and self-consciousness in the face of their challenges. Iqbal, through his works, was able to transform poetry into a form of preaching and an intellectual struggle that synthesised the spiritual, moral, and even political aspects. He did not accept the position that art needs to end with contemplation, but rather maintained that real art should produce life (khudi) and inspire definite activities to transform the world (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2022).

Opposed to much of mainstream thinking, Iqbal was successful in pulling together what was mutually exclusive, and in doing so, erudited himself in many spheres. The Jahiliyyah poets inspired him and, perhaps more than any of them, Rumi, whom he regarded as a spiritual master, as a Sufi imbibed the love ('isyq) of the Sufis, and with the modern Western philosophers drew vitalistic and existentialist inspirations of freedom and life affirmation of a highly active man (Muzaffar, 2002). Then, in an astounding act of marrying the three elements with elements of tawhid, he achieved a distinct kind of active spirituality: love in action, combined with a life that embraces intellectualism. Iqbal had, through these confessions, illustrated the lost vision of Islam in terms of being progressive and a civilisation-reviving dynamism that some had lacked (Razak, 2011).

Iqbal's works constituted a new civilisation indeed, for it was not only poetry that he penned down. One aspect of it was a bridge connecting a spiritual past with the present, facilitating identity construction, and a future demanding a moral and intellectual revival among Muslims (Junid, 2002). In his oeuvre, poetry serves as a weapon of history, as envisioned by Iqbal, inspiring humanity to realise its latent potential, deepen its psyche, and ascend to a higher moral and civilised order. The direct descendant of Iqbal of the present time is not only the possessor of the civilisation in the form of the civilisation of the Islamic world, but also the possessor of the art and beauty that poetry contains (Bibi, 2022).

Iqbal's multifaceted oeuvre transcends mere poetry, forging a new civilizational paradigm that bridges an Islamic spiritual past with contemporary realities, thereby facilitating Muslim identity reconstruction and a future oriented toward moral and intellectual revival. In this vision, poetry emerges as a potent weapon of history, igniting humanity's latent potential, enriching its psychological depths, and propelling ascent to elevated moral and civilizational heights, as evidenced in works that rouse khudi and communal action. Through a hermeneutic-theological lens, Iqbal's verse hermeneutically revitalizes Quranic tawhid and prophetic legacies, transforming aesthetic form into revelatory praxis that integrates transcendent ideals with historical agency, rendering his art a prophetic heirloom inheriting divine purpose while embodying the enduring beauty and vitality of Islamic civilization (Nadwi, 2022).

Conclusion

The journey of poetry in Islamic civilisation is a remarkable narrative of transformation, reflecting the intellectual and spiritual dynamics of Muslims themselves. This study has traced this evolution through three crucial phases. The first phase demonstrates how Islam reoriented poetry, both ethically and teleologically, transforming it from a mirror of Jahiliyyah society (Diwan al-'Arab) into a medium that was subject to the values of tawhid. The second phase shows how poetry reached its sublime peak in the Sufi tradition, becoming a mirror of the soul (mir'at al-qalb) capable of reflecting the mystical experience of divine love (as in Rumi) and self-annihilation (as in Al-Hallaj). The third phase illustrates how poetry was revitalised in the modern era by Muhammad Iqbal, becoming a torch of revival (misykat al-nahdhah) that voiced the philosophy of action and inspired socio-political change.

The central thesis of this research has been confirmed: poetry in Islamic thought is not merely an ornamental art form, but a vital arena in which identity, spirituality, and civilisational aspirations are continuously negotiated, constructed, and expressed. From fiqh legitimisation, the inner experiences of Sufis, to the manifestos of reformists, poetry consistently functions as a language for the most fundamental struggles in Islam. The Islamic tradition's ability to continually reinterpret and empower its poetic medium demonstrates a profound intellectual and spiritual vitality, enabling it to respond to the challenges of the times through the language of beauty, wisdom, and power. While this literature review has provided valuable insights into the evolving role of poetry in Islamic civilization, it acknowledges certain limitations inherent to the method. The selection of sources and texts may reflect biases toward prominent poets like Rumi and Iqbal, potentially overlooking lesser-known voices and regional variations. Additionally, reliance on secondary literature constrains access to original manuscripts and archival materials that might offer new perspectives. Future research could address these limitations through archival work, critical editions of manuscripts, and expanded studies of understudied poets and traditions, thereby enriching the understanding of poetry's multifaceted role across diverse Islamic contexts.

References

Abdul-Razaq, A. A.-W. (2023). Quotation is Imam Ash-Shafi'i's Poetry. *Mağallaẗ Buḥūṯ Al-Luġaẗ*, 4(2), 260–282.. https://doi.org/10.25130/jls.4.2.18

Ahmad, A., & Ahmad, Z. (2022). Wonderfulness of Wonderful Imagination in Iqbal Poetry. *Al-Aijaz Research Journal of Islamic Studies & Humanities*, 6(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.53575/a1.v6.01.(22)1-17

Ahmad, D. B., Ahmad, D. U., & Hussain, M. (2023). Searching the Self through Iqbal's Concept of 'Khudi'for Values under Today's Environment Challenges and Dichotomies. *Bahria University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6, 22-38. https://doi.org/10.58800/bujhss.v6i1.171

Al-Olaqi, F. M. T. (2016). Western polemic writings about Muhammad's Prophethood. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 3(5). https://doi.org/10.14738/ASSRJ.35.2001

Al-Atawneh, M. (2012). Leisure and entertainment (malāhī) in contemporary Islamic legal thought: Music and the audio-visual media. *Islamic law and society*, 19(4), 397-415. https://doi.org/10.1163/156851912X639932

Arberry, A. J. (2013). *Tales from the Masnavi*. London. Routledge. UK. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315026091

Arroisi, J., & Qorib, K. A. (2023). Theory Of Khudi And Spiritual Development On Iqbal's Perspective: Analysis Spiritual Strengthening Islamic Perspective. *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 22(2), 271-297. https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v22i2.370

Aveling, H. (2014). The person and religious poetry in Malay. *Malay Literature*, 27(2), 242-262. https://doi.org/10.37052/ML.27(2)NO3

Bano, N., & Bano, S. (2022). Poetry in the light of Islamic law. *Al Khadim Research Journal of Islamic Culture and Civilization*, 3(1), 85–91. https://doi.org/10.53575/arjicc.v3.01(22)a6.85-91

Bibi, N. (2022). The theory of Islamic literature according to Allama Muhammad Iqbal. *Fahm-I-Islam*, 5(1), 52-74. https://doi.org/10.37605/fahmiislam.v5i1.412

Boayo, S. M. H. (2015). Arabic Literature in The Rise of Islamic Civilisation and The Present Educational System. *ICR Journal*, 6(2), 212-228. https://doi.org/10.12816/0019167

Boostani, M. (2017). Rumi's mystical ontology in his poetry. *Научный результат. Вопросы теоретической и прикладной лингвистики*, 3 (13), 74-77. https://doi.org/10.18413/2313-8912-2017-3-3-74-77

Borg, G. J. A. (2015). Poetry as a source for the history of early Islam. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies,* 15, 137-163. https://doi.org/10.5617/jais.4649

Chittick, W. (2014). Love in Islamic thought. *Religion Compass*, 8(7), 229-238. https://doi.org/10.1111/REC3.12112

Doğan, E. H. (2023). Islamic Literature: An Attempt at A Historical Overview. *Korkut Ata Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (13), 1612-1630. https://doi.org/10.51531/korkutataturkiyat.1353421

Gupta, A. (2023). Ishq-the Sufi Way of leadership. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 28(3), 321-351. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJICBM.2023.129713

Huwaida, H. (2022). Spiritual Values In Pre-Islamic Arabic Literature. *Fitrah: International Islamic Education Journal*, 4(1), 41–53. https://doi.org/10.22373/fitrah.v4i1.1986

Ilham, A. (2022). Deviation from Tribal Traditions: The Other Face of Poetry in Pre-Islamic Arabia. *Al-Ma'rifah*, 19(2), 209-222. https://doi.org/10.21009/almakrifah.19.02.07

Iqbal, M. (1920). *The Secrets of the Self:(Asrár-i Khudí) a Philosophical Poem*. London. Macmillan. UK.

Junid, S. B. (2013). Iqbal and Muslim Unity. *Intellectual Discourse*, 10(2). https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v10i2.439

Khan, A. K. (2017). *On becoming naught: reading the doctrine of Fana and Baqa in the Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).

Kamali, M. H. (2018). *Tajdid, Islah and Civilisational Renewal in Islam (Occasional Papers Series–27) (Vol. 27)*. Virginia. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). US.

Leaman, O. (2010). *Poetry and the Emotions in Islamic Philosophy*. In Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today (pp. 139-150). Dordrecht. Springer. Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-3573-8_8

Lewisohn, L. (2017). Rabindranath Tagore's syncretistic philosophy and the Persian Sufi tradition. *International Journal of Persian Literature*, 2(1), 2-41. https://doi.org/10.5325/intejperslite.2.1.0002

Mohomed, C. (2014). " Islam" as the national identity for the formation of Pakistan: the political thought of Muhammad Iqbal and Abu'l'Ala Mawdudi. *História (São Paulo)*, 33, 317-339. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-90742014000100015

Muzaffar, C. (2002). Iqbal and the Challenge of Reform within the Muslim World. *Intellectual Discourse*, 10(2). https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v10i2.441

Nadwi, A. H. A. (2022). *The Glory of Iqbal.* London. Claritas Books. UK.

Nejad, A. K. (2022). The Conflict Of East & West In Iqbal's Poetry. *Research journal TAṢDĪQ*, 4(1), 23-35. https://doi.org/10.56276/tasdiq.v4i01.96

Noorani, Y. (2014). Muhammad Iqbal and the immanence of God in Islamic modernism. *Religion compass*, 8(2), 60-69. https://doi.org/10.1111/REC3.12093

Osman, R. (2014). The Literary Facets of the Qur'an as a Guideline for Islamic Literary Writing. *Al-Shajarah Journal*, 19(2), 215-250. https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v19i2.319

Papan-Matin, F. (2003). The Crisis of Identity in Rumi's Tale of the Reed. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23(1), 246-253. https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-23-1-2-246

Popp, S. (2019). Muhammad Iqbal–Reconstructing Islam along occidental lines of thought. *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society*, 5(1), 201-229. https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-00501011

Rahman, A. A. R., & Mohezar, S. (2020). Ensuring continued use of a digital library: a qualitative approach. *The Electronic Library*, 38(3), 513-530. https://doi.org/10.1108/EL-12-2019-0294

Rahim, A. (2015). The Spirit of Muslim Culture According to Muhammad Iqbal. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 5(8), 725-729. https://doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2015.V5.547

Ramli, Y. M. (2013). Martyrdom of al-Hallaj and Unity of the Existence: the Condemners and the Commenders. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 3, 106. https://doi.org/10.24035/IJIT.03.2013.010

Razak, M. A. A. (2011). Iqbal's ideas for the restoration of Muslim dynamism. *Journal of Islam in Asia*, 8, 377-402. https://doi.org/10.31436/JIA.V8I0.252

Royani, A., Palaloi, Z., Susiawati, I., & Amartiwi, R. Y. (2022). The role of Arabic poetry in Nahwu rules. *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 14(1), 79-94. https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v14i1.9592

Rumi, J. A. D. (2010). *Mystical poems of Rumi*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. US. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226731636

Seebohm, T. M. (2015). *History as a Science of Interpretation*. In History as a Science and the System of the Sciences: Phenomenological Investigations (pp. 101-129). Cham. Springer International Publishing. Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-13587-8_5

Schlickel, M. (2012). *Research Design and Data Collection*. In Strategy Deployment in Business Units: Patterns of Operations Strategy Cascading Across Global Sites in a Manufacturing Firm (pp. 45-62). Heidelberg. Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Germany. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-33621-8_3

Seyed-Gohrab, A. (2020). Rūmī's Antinomian Poetic Philosophy. *Mawlana Rumi Review*, 9(1-2), 159-199. https://doi.org/10.1163/25898566-00901009

Shamsuddin, S. M. (2022). Narration of Pre-Islamic Poetry and its Sources. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 9(5), 60–70. https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.95.12280

Stepien, R. (2013). A Study in Sufi Poetics: The Case of ʿAṭṭār Nayshābūrī. *Oriens*, 41(1-02), 77-120. https://doi.org/10.1163/18778372-13410103

Talab, M. Z. (2024). An Analysis and Revision of the Arguments of Rulings Related to the Use of Poetry by Schools of Jurisprudence. *Fiqh*, 30, 121-151. 10.22081/jf.2024.66295.2641

Umar, M. S. (2002). Significance of Iqbal's Wisdom Poetry. *Intellectual Discourse*, 10(2). https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v10i2.440

Vasalou, S. (2002). The miraculous eloquence of the Qur'an: General trajectories and individual approaches. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 4(2), 23-53. https://doi.org/10.3366/JQS.2002.4.2.23

Warits, M. S. A., Sangidu, S., & Rokhman, M. A. (2023). The Prophet And Poetry: Theoretical Problems of Islamic Prophetic Texts. *Religió Jurnal Studi Agama-agama*, 13(1), 70-91. https://doi.org/10.15642/religi.v13i1.2285

Wilcox, A. (2011). The dual mystical concepts of Fanā'and Baqā'in Early Sūfism. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 38(01), 95-118. https://doi.org/10.1080/13530191003794681

Yasir, M., Zaib, A., & Usman, M. (2020). An analytical review of different critical commentaries on the poetry and thoughts of Iqbal. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 4(4), 311–328. https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2020(4-IV)23

***Conflict of Interest Statement**: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*