

## Ibn Khaldūn'S Insights on Music as a Craft Perceived Within Islamic Culture

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### Abstract:

Ibn Khaldūn, being a philosopher of history, likely places his more plausible ideas in the context of the development of societies and civilisations and seems more like an observation about one potential source of music (Ghina) rather than a comprehensive theory about music in general and harmony effect of music in specific. 'Ibn Khaldūn did not directly address the legal aspects of music, but his inclusion is indicative of his rational perspective. He viewed humans as social beings inherently inclined toward goodness. In this context, he believed that individuals should seek to fulfil certain natural desires during their leisure time. These desires could include the need for healthy relaxation, the thirst for knowledge, and the enjoyment of music. 'Ibn Khaldūn considered such longings (desires) to be entirely reasonable, but this should be achieved by having good intentions when pursuing these desires. Crafts and sciences result from human thinking ability, which sets us apart from animals. On the other hand, the desire for food is rooted in our animal and nutritive instincts. Food comes first because it's essential, and the sciences and crafts develop. The refinement of these skills and their purpose, shaped by the desires for luxury and wealth, corresponds to the level of advancement in a particular society. 'Ibn Khaldūn's discussion of music among the crafts may be attributed to his focus as a historian. He is primarily interested in the practical aspects of music, such as its creation, performance, and consumption within society at specific stages of its development. This emphasis on the craft aspect aligns with his historical perspective. This understanding of music's origin and development is crucial; when a society accepts to integrate, music is associated with society like a basic need, but at specific phases of its evolution, music is produced, heard, and enjoyed in society. When society begins to disintegrate, music is the first element discarded as an unnecessary excess. Luxuries are typically the first to be relinquished in times of societal decline.

**Keywords:** Craft of music, civilisation development, societal advancement, luxury integration, societal decline.

### Introduction

The music tradition continued during the pre-Islamic periods of Arab history. However, with the rise of Islam and the expansion of the Arab world, they assumed control over vast territories. In this context, they retained their traditional desert lifestyle, characterised by a relatively low standard of living. Moreover, their adherence to the tenets of Islam, which included religious austerity and a focus on matters of faith and livelihood, led them to avoid indulgence in music to some extent. Music was highly developed in cities and towns in non-Arab states, eagerly cultivated by the (non-Arab) rulers, to the point where the Persian rulers felt a great concern for musicians. 'Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) saw the permissible forms of musical pleasure as the rhythmic recitation of the Qur'an and the melodic poetry, which had always been part of their customs.<sup>1</sup>

To understand the role of music in Islamic culture, one only needs to look at different periods of Islamic history or even observe the present day. Music has been a significant part of many core aspects of this tradition.<sup>2</sup> In Arabic, there are three main words for music: Musiqi<sup>3</sup>, Ghina<sup>4</sup>, and Sama<sup>5</sup> in the

<sup>1</sup> 'Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd ar-Rahmān 'Ibn Muḥammad. *The Muqaddimah*: Princeton University Press, London, 2015, Page 490.

<sup>2</sup> al-Faruqi. *Al-Ghazali on sama*: al-Faruqi (ed.), *Essays in Islamic and Comparative Studies*, Herndon, Virginia, 1982, Page 44-45.

context of the mentioned vocabulary, but with certain conditions. “Musiqi” had one of its uses as the theoretical study<sup>1</sup> of the subject, which itself comes from Greek origins. Kindi (801–873) used the term in this way, and some scholars have taken it to be its only meaning. Some Arabic writings, like the Ikhwan al-Safa, for example, consider it equivalent to “Ghina” in its broadest sense. In this sense, it's a general term for music. In this context, it could refer to expressions like “ilm al-Musiqi” (the science of music) or “Sina at al-Musiqi” (the art-science of music). However, it's also used to refer to the practical aspect of music, the performed art, rather than the theoretical science.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn mentions music as one of the rational (philosophical) fields of science.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Khaldūn considered such longings (desires) to be entirely reasonable, and he believed that individuals, through their discernment of what was beneficial or harmful in these desires, could make them socially and spiritually advantageous. If individuals acted with good intentions, their desires would be deemed lawful. He viewed music as a potential source of beneficial and lawful recreation and enjoyment, provided it was approached with good intentions and discernment. He also engages in discussions about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of generalising from a specific case to conclude that the same applies to all instances of certain types of music. Music is classified as a science. Specifically, the third mathematical science, Ibn Khaldūn, discussed all technical explanations and the importance of harmonising effects in singing. Harmony may also result from composition. Not everyone understands or can perform music the same way, and the science of music explores these differences.<sup>4</sup>

As a historian, Ibn Khaldūn talks about music among the crafts rather than the sciences: rather than music's theoretical study, what interests him is the phenomenon of music as it is composed, performed, and consumed in society at different points in its evolution. Creating and performing are also components of the craft.<sup>5</sup> Due to the harmony and the character that harmony imparts to the sounds, the outcome is pleasing to listen to. Other solid-sounding noises that can be made by blowing into or pounding specific instruments can be added to the rhythmic modes of singing to complete the musical experience. It is more enjoyable to listen to such instrumental music.<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khaldūn also compiled a collection of biographies, encompassing not only composers but also celebrities, musicians, and notable individuals in the field of music.

These biographies offered valuable insights into the lives and contributions of these figures, further enriching the historical and cultural understanding of music during that era. In Ibn Khaldūn's

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<sup>3</sup> The word “Musiqi” was borrowed by the Arabs from the Greek language. In modern times, “Musiqi” is similar to the English word “music” and is used as the general term for it. Music is when a person hear sounds, like singing or playing instruments, and they sound good together, creating a sense of beauty, harmony, and emotions. Some people say it's like putting sounds and silences in an organized way. For example, when you listen to the noise on the radio, it's just random sounds, so that's not considered music but defining music isn't so simple. It's like creating a piece of art by arranging sounds in a certain order using melody, harmony, rhythm, and the way instruments or voices sound. Music is something people from all around the world enjoy and make part of their culture.

<sup>4</sup> “Ghina” is an Arabic word, and in its everyday sense, it means “singing.” In its etymological (relating to the origin and historical development of words and their meanings) sense, it's said to mean raising one's voice. During that period, it was also used for two different kinds of singing. Some people used it to describe the high art of singing, while others used it for simpler, more sensual types of songs. “Ghina” was also the closest Arabic word to being a general term for music. So, it was suggested as an equivalent to “Musiqi” in its general sense. In this broader sense, “Ghina” doesn't only refer to songs but can also include discussions about instruments, their sounds, and how they are used. However, since most of Arabic music involves singing, the general use of “Ghina” still connects to its everyday meaning of “singing.”

<sup>5</sup> Sufi literature, which is related to Islamic mysticism, “Sama” refers to a practice where a specific type of music is listened to in order to assist the seeker in achieving their religious or spiritual goals. Sometimes, during such occasions, a mystical dance is also performed. It's this initial connection with Sufi practices that has made the term primarily associated with Sufism.

<sup>1</sup> We should differentiate between the philosophy of music and what is known as the theory of music. Music theorists focus on elements related to music itself, like tones, intervals, melodies, rhythms, modes, musical composition, as well as musical instruments and their roles in music theory and performance. The philosophy of music deals with broader, more abstract concepts and questions about the nature and meaning of music, its relationship with human experience, and its role in society and culture.

<sup>2</sup> Cetinkaya, Dr Yalcin. *Ibn Khaldun and Music as a Science of Mathematical Sciences*: Journal of Ibn Haldun Studies, 2017, Page 99.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Page 100, 101.

<sup>4</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 490.

<sup>5</sup> Shehadi, Fadlou. *Philosophies of music in medieval Islam*: EJ Brill, Leiden, Netherland, 1995, Page 147.

<sup>6</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 488.

“Muqaddimah,” he mentions that in Madina, individuals like Nashit al-Farisi,<sup>1</sup> Tuwais,<sup>2</sup> and Sa’ib Khathir,<sup>3</sup> who was associated with Abdullah bin Jafar (a descendant of Abu Talib), made a notable impact. They listened to the poetry of the Arabs and added musical accompaniments to them. Their work was highly regarded, and they gained widespread recognition for their talent. They influenced other singers and musicians, like Ma’bad.<sup>4</sup> and ‘Ibn Surayj,<sup>5</sup> who learned from them and continued this musical tradition.

### Music and Islam

Islamic thinkers were particularly concerned with matters related to the relationship between music and Islam. This included questions about whether a devout Muslim should be allowed to listen to music, considering Islamic law. If listening was permissible, there were further discussions about what kinds of music were acceptable for a good Muslim to engage with. The discussions regarding the permissibility of listening to music are deeply rooted in Islamic traditions, both in terms of their substance and the manner in which they are presented. This is true not only for arguments that draw upon the authority of the Quran and Hadith but for the entire discourse on music within Islam. The matter of listening to music in Islam is not just about the music itself but primarily concerns the nature of a life dedicated to God in every belief and action. In puritanical Islamic beliefs, listening to music is often likened to engaging in games, viewed as mere forms of amusement and diversion. Moreover, there is a more particular concern that stems from the association of listening to music with behaviours like drinking wine and involvement in illicit sexual activities.

Whether it is permissible to listen to music falls within the realm of the philosophy of music as the question of passing moral judgment on behaviour, which includes listening to music, is a philosophical, moral issue in a broad sense. It is a part of the moral philosopher’s interest in ethics within the domain of art. Specifically, in Islam, this issue is a matter of religious morality. Qudi Abu-tayyib at-Tabari is associated with ash-Shafi’i line. Malik, Abu Hanifa, Sufyan, and several other learnt expressions suggest that they considered it to be prohibited. “That a man should listen to a woman who is not within the prohibited degrees of kinship is unlawful according to Ash-Shafi’i’s followers,” he continued, “equally whether she is in plain view or behind a curtain, is free or a slave.” And Shafi’i remarked, “Playing chess is more disliked than playing any other musical instrument due to tradition.” Malik, on the other hand, has

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<sup>1</sup> Nashit al-Farisi was a celebrated musician of Persian origin who played a significant role in introducing and developing musical traditions within the Islamic world. His expertise and innovative techniques influenced the evolution of Arabic music, blending Persian and Arab musical styles to create unique and harmonious compositions that were appreciated in elite and cultural circles.

<sup>2</sup> Tuwais, whose real name was Aban bin Isa, was another esteemed musician and singer of Medina. He earned his nickname, which means “little peacock,” due to his elegant appearance and charming demeanor. Tuwais was known for his melodious voice and mastery over various musical forms, making him a favorite entertainer among the nobility and common people alike. His performances often took place in gatherings hosted by influential figures, including Abdullah ‘Ibn Ja’far.

<sup>3</sup> Sa’ib Khathir was a prominent musician and composer, also of Persian descent, who made significant contributions to the musical landscape of early Islamic society. He was renowned for his skill in playing the lute and for composing intricate and soulful melodies. Sa’ib Khathir’s association with Abdullah ‘Ibn Ja’far helped in elevating his status as a musician, as he frequently performed in Abdullah’s assemblies, which were known for their cultural and artistic richness.

<sup>4</sup> Ma’bad bin Wahb al-Makki was born in Mecca and is considered one of the most important musicians and singers of the Umayyad era. He was of mixed Arab and African descent, which influenced his musical style and gave him a unique voice that was highly regarded. Ma’bad was a pioneer in the art of “ghina,” a style of singing characterized by a rich and emotive vocal delivery. He is credited with creating new musical modes and enhancing the expressive capabilities of Arabic music. His style was deeply emotional and resonant, often focusing on themes of love and longing, which captivated audiences across the Islamic empire. His influence was so profound that many later musicians and singers emulated his style, and he became a key figure in the transmission of musical knowledge in the early Islamic period. Ma’bad’s music was particularly popular in the courts of the Umayyad caliphs, where he performed frequently.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Abdullah bin Surayj was born in Mecca. He came from a family of singers and musicians, which helped him develop his skills from a young age. Like Ma’bad, ‘Ibn Surayj was known for his beautiful voice and mastery of the art of singing. ‘Ibn Surayj is often credited with advancing the classical Arabic musical tradition by incorporating Persian and Byzantine influences into his performances. He was particularly known for his ability to convey deep emotion through his singing, making his performances unforgettable. He also introduced new musical forms and rhythms, contributing to the diversification and enrichment of Arabic music. ‘Ibn Surayj’s style became immensely popular, and he was often invited to perform at the courts of the Umayyad caliphs, where his music was highly appreciated. His legacy continued to influence musicians long after his time, and he is remembered as one of the great masters of early Islamic music.

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banned singing. With the exception of Ibrahim b. Sa'd, it is the opinion of the people of Madina. For his part, Abi Hanifa thought it was sinful to hear singing.<sup>1</sup>

Now, we come to “musiqi”. This category includes ceremonial music, caravan recitations, military band music (all permissible), and sensual songs (generally forbidden). The challenge is to find a term that can encompass both these groups - those that were and were not referred to as “musiqi.” Some scholars believe that when the Quran mentions, “As for poets, they are followed (merely) by deviants.”<sup>2</sup> It might be referring to poets who criticised the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, not music itself. This interpretation suggests that music might not be forbidden. It could be directed at poets who opposed the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Islamic puritanism and mysticism have engaged in (the anti-musical) arguments and disagreements since the beginning of Islam, with the former side emphasising divine transcendence and the importance of law, and the latter group emphasising the strength of faith, immanence, and Love. “One way to understand the disagreement over sama is as a component of a broader dispute between legal experts and Sufis, specifically the Sufi endorsement of the Neoplatonic “eros” doctrine and the Hanbalite-orthodox endorsement of the “nomos” doctrine.” Less frequently, nevertheless, one finds Sufis who considered Sama’ reprehensible.<sup>3</sup> However, “it is possible to regard Muslim mystical theosophy as encapsulating the dynamic and adaptable essence of Islam.” Islam’s core spring for those who believe that a relationship is the source of all religion must be Sufism, which, like all mysticism, focuses on the intimate relationship between the believer and God.”<sup>4</sup>

Quran mentions “poets who go astray” might not be a condemnation of poetry itself but rather a critique of certain poets who, in the eyes of the Prophet, were seen as promoting pagan ideas and criticising him. This perspective indicates that poetry, and by extension, music, may not necessarily be prohibited.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Farmer points out that every Prophet sent by Allah had a beautiful voice, and the other suggests that Allah pays special attention to a person with a beautiful voice reciting the Quran. One group believes that the prohibition of music can be directly traced back to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself. In contrast, the other group suggests that theologians introduced it later, during the Abbasid era.<sup>6</sup> Tuwais, an early and significant musician in Islamic history, played a square tambourine known as the “duff murabba.” In addition, Baidawi’s interpretation of a Quranic verse, “All glory belongs to Allah, the Creator of the sky and the ground, Who created angels—who may have two, three, or four wings, as His messengers. Whatever He wishes, He increases in creation. Undoubtedly, Allah is All-Powerful, implying that it’s a reference to a “beautiful voice.”<sup>7</sup>

Hujwiri, in his work “Kashf al-Mahjub”, mentions that there are well-known traditions in Islam that describe how the inhabitants of paradise enjoy music. In this heavenly place, it is said that every tree produces different voices and melodies. When these diverse sounds come together, they create a delightful experience that appeals to the inner spirit. This enjoyment of music is considered common to all living beings because the spirit has a natural inclination towards sounds that resonate with its essence.<sup>8</sup> These various interpretations and historical accounts add to the complexity of the discussion around the permissibility of music in Islam, with some evidence suggesting that it was allowed and appreciated. In contrast, others have introduced restrictions or prohibitions over time.<sup>9</sup>

## Ancient Arabia

<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, Duncan B. *Emotional Religion in Islām as Affected by Music and Singing*: The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1901, Page 200-05.

<sup>2</sup> Quran (26:224)

<sup>3</sup> Lewisohn, Leonard. *The Sacred Music of Islam: Samā' in the Persian Sufi Tradition*: British Journal of Ethnomusicology, Vol. 6, 1997, Page 3.

<sup>4</sup> M. Lewis. *Sufism in Somaliland: A Study in Tribal Islam*: Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 18, Issue. 1, 1956, Page 149.

<sup>5</sup> Farmer, Henry George. *A History of Arabian Music*: London, 1929, Page 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Page 22.

<sup>7</sup> al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad 'Ibn Muḥammad. *Ihya Ulum al-Din*: Darul-Ishaat, Karachi Page 214.

<sup>8</sup> Shaykh 'Alī al-Hujwiri. *Kashf al-Mahjub*: Zia-ul-Quran Publications, Lahore, 2001, Page 399.

<sup>9</sup> *Emotional Religion in Islām as Affected by Music and Singing*: Page 211-13.



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The only appreciable thing for Arabs was poetry since it had harmony, and it was highly valued by some nobility in this speech: To avail their history, wisdom, and nobility, they would use poetry. Thus they utilised it to express their natural sense of their best expression - They have kept on it. The young men and the camel drivers sang to entertain themselves. They would hum and sing with themselves. They called it singing” when they used it in poetic form.<sup>1</sup> Arabs originally had only poetry” This statement suggests that poetry was one of the earliest and most fundamental forms of artistic and cultural expression among the Arabs. In the absence of written records, poetry played a crucial role in preserving their history and traditions. “They made poetry the archive of their history, their wisdom, and their nobility”: Arab poets have historically been the keepers of their people’s history and wisdom. Through their verses, they documented not only historical events but also the moral and ethical values that defined their society. Poetry also celebrated the nobility and honour of individuals and tribes. “The touchstone of their natural gift for expressing themselves correctly”: Poetry served as a means of refining the Arabs’ linguistic skills and eloquence. It was the standard by which their ability to express themselves with precision and artistry was measured.

A command of poetry was an indication of a person’s mastery of language. “Both young men and camel drivers sang whether they were by themselves or when driving their camels.” This speaks to the ubiquity of poetry in Arab daily life, like driving camels or during solitary moments; the practice of reciting or composing poetry was commonplace. It underscores how deeply ingrained poetry was in the Arab cultural fabric. When Islam emerged, the Arabs became dominant- They overpowered the non-Arabs - Their attitude was rustic and low standard of life. Along with it, they were blessed with a powerful Islamic religion, associated with strict orders about daily activities. That is why music was not allowed. They only preferred to send & and hum Quranic Verses. They hummed about Quranic verses in o poetic and pleasurable style.<sup>2</sup> In ancient Arabia, the Bedouin people had a deep love for music. Their hopes, actions, and feelings were expressed through rhythmic Arabic poetry, which could be as long or short as the stride of a camel.

During the rule of the Quraish in Mecca, poets and musicians from all over the Arabian Peninsula competed to showcase their talents at the Ukaz fair. Here, singing girls, known as “Qainat” or “Qiyān,” sang the famous Mu’allaqat, a form of Arabic poetry. It is also known that the Egyptians were not fully successful in availing something in the teaching of crafts. For instance, the Egyptians tame their domestic donkeys, other animals quadruped, birds and some other dumb animals to utter Certain words which will distinguish Them from the rest of the world’s animals, & especially the occidental/western world: The intellect and insight of the man in boosted by scientific instructions and better manners one which enables one to enhance his altitude in this way, people from the east become most clever due to their spiritual purification, affected by scientific activity, it in thought by a common person that it is the main difference in the reality of human life.<sup>3</sup> It’s worth noting that in highly developed civilisations like Egypt, individuals possess unique skills. They can train animals like birds and domestic donkeys to perform astonishing feats that create the illusion of transforming objects. They can also teach the art of the camel driver’s recitation, how to dance and walk on ropes suspended in the air, how to lift heavy animals and stones, and other remarkable talents.

However, these particular crafts are not found in our region, the Maghrib, because the level of civilisation in Maghribi cities is not comparable to that of Egypt and Cairo. The music of pre-Islamic Arabia was mainly secular, and the musicians often held onto their pagan traditions. Even during the pilgrimage, some primitive musical recitations were present. The Arabs of that time believed in the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 490.

<sup>2</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 491.

<sup>3</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 506-07.

mysterious power of music, which they witnessed in their everyday lives. They observed that the pace of camels could change with different rhythms or measures, melodies could calm the deer, and various creatures, including snakes, bees, and birds, could be influenced or affected by the sounds of music. Both Imru'ul-Qais and Labid, poets from the pre-Islamic era, mention "maidens circling a pillar," accompanied by music or song. However, every line of this collection of ordinary poetry is a direct descendant of ancient Arabian poetry and will always be such.<sup>1</sup>

### Islamic Period

However, this is not true in the initial stage of Islam; music was associated with strict restrictions on singing directly related to music. In the era of the Abbasid Dynasty, secretaries and skilled people engrossed themselves with it to enable themselves to know about the methods and literary disciplines of Arabs. They did not feel worried about applying it to their manliness – The early Hijazi Muslims of Madina and other areas applied & practically. Such a great scholar and judge, Abu-l-Faraj-al-Isfahani, wrote a book about songs named "Al-Aghani". This book comprised the whole history, poetry, battle days, genealogy and the dominant royal families of the Arabs- It had a combination of a hundred songs selected by the singers for Al-Rashid. It is considered to be the most accomplished work it really possesses the essence of Arabian culture. It is also a collection of famous ancient Arab poetry, having history, song and other conditions - The book has no match up to the present. That's the major goal for a literary person through which one can be inspired how to stop and proceed!<sup>2</sup>

The primary source of information on music is Kitab al-Aghani, the "Book of Songs," comprising a collection of poems dating from the pre-Islamic era to the ninth century, all of which had been set to music. Kitab afghani is a monumental 10,000-page ethnographic document that was compiled in the tenth century.<sup>3</sup> The book provides biographical details about the authors, composers, singers, and music writers, offering valuable insights into the music and musicians of that time. The Aghani describes multiple instances of music being played at nighttime gatherings. The application of the fighter-martyr symbolism to romantic conflicts seems like a risky and possibly even silly invention from the later part of the seventh century, yet it is nonetheless very creative. The current tendency of incorporating religious themes and language into love poetry strongly points to the Arab origin of the conceit."<sup>4</sup>

The historical accounts also indicate that the music tradition in Islam had its roots in the period of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. "Kitab al-Aghani al-Kabir" notes that when Islam emerged in a world characterised by intellectual darkness, the first male musician to make history was Tuwais (d. 88/705). He was known for accompanying himself on a square tambourine (daff) and would perform while moving among his audience. This suggests that musical expression was present in the early days of Islam, with Tuwais being a notable figure. Kitab al-Aghani al-Kabir. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ liked the recitation of the Holy Quran with beautiful voices,<sup>5</sup> such as Abu Mahdura, and he likened the recitation (qara'a) of his companions. Under the Umayyad caliphate (661-750), the classical style of Islamic music continued to evolve, particularly in Damascus, the capital of modern-day Syria. Musicians frequented the Umayyad courts, and the musical culture flourished.

In the initial stage Islam had no science and skillful knowledge due to simple environment. The religious orders and serious injunctions were in the minds of their higher leaders. These close companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had obtained each spiritual and moral lesson from the Last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his subordinates. They had Arab nationality. They did not know any scientific discoveries and systematically composed books. Yet, they did not need it in the real sense. This

<sup>1</sup> Sowayan, Saad. *The Hilali poetry in the "Muqaddimah" its links to Naba'i poetry*: Oriente Moderno, Vol. 22, Issue. 83, 2003, Page 279.

<sup>2</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 637.

<sup>3</sup> Dimitri Sawa, George. *Music Performance Practice in the Early 'Abbasid Era 132-320*: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1989, Page 157-88.

<sup>4</sup> Gustave E. von Grunebaum. *Medieval Islam: A Study in Central Orientation*, Chicago University Press, 1969, Page 301.

<sup>5</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari 7527, Sunan Abi Da wu d 1471

situation prevailed during and after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. People who were well versed in terms of comprehending the Quran were called “Quran Readers”. Most of the people were generally illiterate because they were Bedouins.<sup>1</sup> This period was followed by prosperity and luxury due to their ability to get benefits and spoils from other nations around - Their lifestyle changed in terms of facilities. The Singers then moved from Persians and Byzantines.

They Shifted to Hijaz and became the students of Arabs. They began to sing accompanied by various musical instruments like Lyre, lute, flutes and pandores. They (Arabs) set their poetry according to their music as they heard this melodious use of sound. Thus, music and singing changed in terms of improvement. At the time of the Abbasid Dynasty, singers reached their sublime level.<sup>2</sup> When Islam adopted the practice of the Hajj pilgrimage, it refined the rituals and separated them from music and song. Some argue that Abbasid jurists introduced the idea of opposing music. The old pagan recitations of the pilgrimage, like the tahlil and talbiyya, were adapted into Islam and deemed permissible, even allowing the use of instruments like the drum (tabl) and fife (shahin) in association with these rituals.<sup>3</sup>

**The influence of a beautiful voice is well-documented in literature.**

The same is the condition in current Spain. There can be found crafts and institutions which still exist. They are fully equipped with modern Spanish customs- For example, They include cooking, buildings, various lands of singing and entertainment like that of music produced by instruments, string instruments and dance, use of carpets inside the mansions, fully pledged constructed houses, production of pottery and metal vessels, various types of utensils/pots, donation of banquets and marriages, and all other luxurious crafts according to the customs. These things are known to them better as compared to other nations, even though the civilisation of Spain has gone through various changes, around The Mediterranean Shore. This is because The culture of Spain has been strengthened by non-migratory culture boosted by the Umayyad dynasty, the previous Gothic dynasty, the Reyes de taifas, who followed the Dynasty and so on.<sup>4</sup> Historical accounts from sources like “Tabakat-i Nasiri” provide insights into the significant role of music in the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt. The Fatimids, like the caliph of Baghdad, bestowed musical honours upon subject rulers during their marches and events.

**Musicology, Islamic culture and Melodies in reciting the Holy Qur’an**

Ibn Khaldun discusses the interplay between Quranic recitation and the rhythm of the music. Should the Quranic verses be recited? That is the basic question. Ibn Khaldun relies on various stances maintained by the giants of the Islamic School of Law. Malik explicitly disagreed with the lyrical recitation of the Quran; however, Shafi endorsed it. This issue doesn’t confine the artistic melodies. There is no loophole for the debate on the fact that they are condemned. The artistic singing of lyrics cannot relate to the Quran. Regarding the pronunciation of the letters of the Quran, one must utter the specific sound for the specific letter or word; for instance, one must keep in sight the location where the vowel needs to be shortened or some degree of extension. In the same way, musical music also relies on certain patterns of sounds because its sole purpose is pleasing the audience. However, both contradict each other up to a greater extent. For the sake of protecting the traditional transmission of the Quran, the recitation of the Quran must be prioritised. Hence, the Quranic recitation and the rhythm of music cannot be merged at all as for the varying views among authorities regarding the permissibility of melodic music for Quranic recitation, what the authorities think about is the kind of music that naturally comes to a musical person, as was previously mentioned. Someone like that arranges their sounds into precise, melodic patterns that other people and singers can identify as music. This is where people’s perspectives diverge.

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<sup>1</sup> The Muqaddimah: Page 623, 624.

<sup>2</sup> The Muqaddimah: Page 491.

<sup>3</sup> al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad ‘Ibn Muḥammad. *Ihya Ulum al Din*, Page 220.

<sup>4</sup> The Muqaddimah: Page 471.

According to him, Malik was against the use of melodies in Quranic recitation, while al-Shafi'i allowed it.<sup>1</sup> However, it's important to clarify that this issue does not concern artistic, musical melodies; there is no difference of opinion that such melodies are prohibited. The art of singing is entirely unrelated to the Qur'an. In the recitation and pronunciation of the Qur'an, each letter or sound necessitates a specific quantity of sound for its proper articulation. This applies to various aspects, such as the elongation of vowels in appropriate places and the length of pronunciation of long vowels, among other considerations. Melodious music also relies on a specific quantity of sound to manifest because, as previously explained, its essence is harmony. However, these two practices are mutually exclusive, as they stand in opposition to each other.

The second question revolves around whether Quranic recitation can be classified as a form of music, particularly Ghina. 'Ibn Khaldūn argues that the controversy should not revolve around the addition of "artistic, musical melodies" to Quranic recitation, as there would generally be agreement that such additions should be forbidden. Instead, Quranic recitation involves "plain music" or simple modulation. This plain music is distinct from the artistic musical melodies found in Ghina. Therefore, 'Ibn Khaldūn asserts that Quranic recitation is not considered a part of music or Ghina; it is more focused on the simple modulation of the Quranic text for recitation. As the imam (Malik) believed that the Qur'an must be maintained pure of it. Because of its reminder of death and what lies beyond, the Qur'an inspires fear in people. Beautiful sounds should not be enjoyed on this occasion. According to their biographies, this is how the men surrounding Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ recited the Qur'an.

That the Prophet ﷺ addressed him, saying, "O Abu Musa! You have been bestowed with one of the mazamir (sweet melodious voices) of the family of David."<sup>2</sup> However, it still refers to a lovely voice, distinct letter (sound) articulation, and clarity when reciting the Qur'an. Reciting the Qur'an must take precedence to preserve its traditional transmission. Therefore, melodious music and the specific pronunciation required for the Qur'an cannot be combined. Plain music is at the centre of the dispute among experts over whether or not melodic music is appropriate for the recital of the Qur'an, which individuals with a natural musical aptitude (midmar) naturally create. Such individuals arrange their sounds into harmonious cadences,<sup>3</sup> which are perceived as music by those knowledgeable about singing and others. This is the point around which the difference of opinion centres.

'Ibn Khaldūn distinguish Quranic recitation from the melodies of Ghina (singing). While both Quranic recitation and Ghina involve sound modulation, he emphasises that the art of singing (Ghina) is entirely separate from the Quranic recitation. 'Ibn Khaldūn contends that melodious music (as found in singing) is unsuitable for the Quran. He argues that the primary purpose of Quranic recitation is to convey the text with clear pronunciation. The goal is to facilitate an accurate understanding of the Quranic verses. Thus, he believes that melodious music, often associated with artistic pleasure, is incompatible with the precise pronunciation and clarity required for Quranic recitation.

### **Spiritual effects of music**

'Ibn Khaldūn acknowledges the spiritual effects of music in Sufism, a branch of Islamic mysticism, without immediately condemning it as more orthodox theologians might. This stance places him in the tradition of Islamic thinkers who have a broader view of the role of music and recognise its significance, particularly in the context of the "serious side" of music. Sufism is a path that opens doors to the silence

<sup>1</sup> This reveals a historical debate within Islamic jurisprudence regarding the permissibility of employing melodies or musical elements when reciting the Quran.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 66, Hadith 5048

<sup>3</sup> Cadence (Latin cadentia, "a falling"), particularly in music from the 16th century onwards, is the conclusion of a phrase in which the melody or harmony evokes a sensation of full or partial resolve. A harmonic cadence is the last note of a phrase, part, or musical work that consists of two or more chords. A distinctive rhythmic pattern known as a rhythmic cadence signals the conclusion of a sentence. A rhythm can be classified as "strong" or "weak" based on the sense of closure it conveys. Although particular chord or melodic changes are typically used to identify rhythms, the use of such progressions alone does not always imply a cadence. There needs to be a sense of closing, such as at the end of a phrase. Where a cadence occurs is mostly determined by the harmonic rhythm.



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that is at the core of human existence. This silence is the source of all meaningful activities and deeds, the most beautiful music heard only by the sages, and the very source of life and human existence.<sup>1</sup> According to “Kashf al-Mahjub,” abundant literature attests to the deep impact a beautiful voice can have on individuals. This suggests that the tradition of reciting odes of eulogy in Islam can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ when the power of a beautiful voice was acknowledged and appreciated.

The term “Sama” refers to the audience’s activity of listening or auditioning rather than the music itself (It is primarily used in discussions about whether it’s allowed to listen to music and, if so, which types are permitted.) Therefore, “Sama” is mainly used in moral and religious discussions, not in the context of music theory and practice. Regarding ‘Ibn al-Arabi, in a broader context, “Sama” takes on a cosmological dimension.<sup>2</sup> According to this view, God, in the act of creation, manifested His Speech, and it’s through His creation that we have the opportunity to listen to Him and His word. This is regarded as “Sama” in its absolute form. It would be impossible to discuss Islamic art and spirituality without mentioning music, which has enormous spiritual significance both in and of itself and in relation to poetry, as demonstrated by the instance of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Despite not being traditionally categorised as either, the Quran itself is both music and poetry in its conventional prosody. But being the inspired word of God places it above all other categories of human creation.

‘Ibn Khaldūn’s recognition of the use of music “Sama” by Sufis to attain a state of remoteness from sensual perception highlights the role of music in facilitating spiritual experiences. By listening to music, “Sama”, Sufis aim to transcend their bodily perceptions and become receptive to supernatural perception, thus exchanging the sensory for the spiritual. However, ‘Ibn Khaldūn is careful to emphasise that even in this mystical state, the mystic remains inferior to the prophetic level, acknowledging the unique status of the Prophet within Islamic tradition.

**‘Ibn Khaldūn about the craft of singing and music.**

The art of singing is the last craft to be developed in a civilisation because it reflects the last step towards luxury in terms of any occupation other than leisure and enjoyment. It is also the first to disappear from a given civilisation when it collapses and regresses. Midwifery is considered a noble craft due to the subject matter that is at its core (sharif bi-l-mawdu).<sup>3</sup>

In the early days of Islamic society, the values of the desert, which were more serious and less inclined towards frivolous distractions, were still prevalent. However, despite this conservative attitude, music continued to develop and thrive. When poetry was the predominant form of expression among the Arabs, they had not yet delved into various sciences or crafts. The desert environment largely influenced their way of life. When singing becomes common in a civilisation, people move from necessities to conveniences and ultimately to a wide range of luxuries. This is because singing is only needed by those who have nothing to do with the constant need to support themselves and take care of their homes and other needs. It is only desired by people who are worry-free and seek various ways of having pleasure. Music was highly developed in cities and towns in the non-Arab states before Islam. It was enthusiastically fostered by the (non-Arab) rulers. The Persian kings became extremely concerned about musicians as a result of it. Throughout their dynasty, musicians were respected members who performed for them at meetings and events. In all of their regions and provinces at present time, non-Arabs continue to face the same discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

**Crafts, Basic Needs, Civilization and Music**

<sup>1</sup> Hossein Nasr, Seyyed. *Islamic Art and Spirituality*: State University of New York Press, 1987, Page 164.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Page 151.

<sup>3</sup> Giladi, Avner. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 42, Issue. 2 May 2010, Page 185.

<sup>4</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 490.

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The craft of singing is not a fundamental or essential skill for survival or work but a form of artistic expression that becomes prominent in advanced and prosperous societies. It suggests that as civilisation evolves and its basic needs are met, people have the time and resources to invest in pursuits that are not directly tied to their livelihoods, which become essential needs later, like basic needs. Singing, in this context, is viewed as a luxury because it doesn't serve a specific occupational or useful purpose but is primarily for leisure and entertainment. Humans have developed an extensive variety of crafts due to the constant availability of labour in civilisations. They are difficult to list in full because there are so many. But due to their purpose, some of them hold a noble (status) or are essential to civilisation. We will just discuss these two types and leave the others unmentioned. Significant skills are agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, and weaving. These are holy as their object is midwifery, the art of writing, book creation, singing, and medicine.

Midwifery is important in civilisation and an affair of serious attention as it is directly related to new ones. Medicines protect health and save from diseases. It is a division of physics. The main goal is the human body. Book creation and writing skills preserve things of interest to humans and make them preserved. It helps the voice of the soul to float to those who are away. It retains ideas and scholarly findings in books. The harmony of sounds and their audible beauty are expressed via singing. For all three of these crafts, one has to speak secretly and at private gatherings with great rulers. They possess a nobility lacking in other crafts. The other crafts are smaller and less important.<sup>1</sup> Singing, showcasing their aesthetic qualities to all who listen. All three of these crafts often involve interaction with esteemed rulers, allowing them to share in private and intimate gatherings. Consequently, they possess a certain nobility that other crafts may not. While other crafts are generally considered secondary and subservient, people's perspectives on them can vary based on distinct purposes and requirements.

The craft of singing is the last to develop in civilisation, as it represents the ultimate level of luxury, focusing on leisure and entertainment. Simultaneously, it is the first to wane when a civilisation begins to decline and regress. The same secular socio-economic forces that initially led to the rise of music eventually contributed to its decline. 'Ibn Khaldūn, who looked at things from a historical perspective, sees the emergence of music as a later development in the life cycle of a civilisation. According to him, when a society reaches a certain level of wealth and luxury, people start seeking various forms of entertainment and pleasure. There was an art of city textiles, and perhaps enough examples are preserved from medieval Iraq and Egypt to identify various social levels of "this most Islamic of crafts". The rise of a bourgeoisie and the dissemination of adab (literature), the polite educational ideal of the secretarial sector, gave birth, among other things, to new garments and fabrics.<sup>2</sup> Music becomes a means to satisfy this desire. In the medieval era of Islamic art, hunting scenes and portraying musicians and dancers were among the activities that the elite class found most enjoyable. This style of art is referred to as the princely cycle. First, it emerged in the early eighteenth century in Umayyad palaces in Syria and then expanded under the Abbasids.<sup>3</sup>

A huge number of attendants, concubines, and eunuchs catered to the Abbasid caliphs, their families, and high officials. Living in such a place, which Oleg Grabar called "brilliant imperial life", the wealthy dwellers of these places were running the state affairs and preserving the cultural values. Around their palaces, they built gardens and playgrounds for their hobbies. They enjoyed feasts and music and had secret night parties with close friends. They spent huge amounts of money on embellishment and food and invited the elite class to their gathering for amusement and pleasure. Not surprisingly, sources depict palace life as the pinnacle of luxury, the antithesis of an austere way of life.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 475.

<sup>2</sup> Shoshan, Boaz. *High Culture and Popular Culture in Medieval Islam*: Studia Islamica, Issue. 73, 1991, Page 81.

<sup>3</sup> E.G, Grabar. *Ceremonial and Art, The Illustration of the Maqamat*: Chicago, London, 1984, Page141-77.

<sup>4</sup> *Islamic Art*: Page 164.

Craftmanship develops when civilisations are flourishing. As and when civilisations become advanced, the numbers of crafts tend to increase in a society. For instance, the trade of cobbler, the tanner, silk weaving, goldsmith, etc. When civilisation hits its full potential, crafts are flawless. In return they become a source of sustenance for people as well. As a result, they are the most cherished activities, as urban extravagances urge them. Many other crafts are perfumer, coppersmith, bath attendant, cook, biscuit baker, and teacher of singing, dancing, and rhythmical drum beating.<sup>1</sup> Singing typically emerges in a society when it has reached a state of abundance, progressed from mere necessities to conveniences, and then further advanced to luxuries, leading to a wide range of available luxuries. It is at this point that the craft of singing comes into existence. Singing is a pursuit sought after only by those who are free from the immediate and pressing concerns of making a livelihood and tending to basic needs. It is the pastime of those who have no other pressing worries and who seek various means of enjoyment.

“For Arabs at first ‘music’ was avoided to some degree” In the early stages of Arab culture, there was a certain degree of avoidance or reluctance toward music. This might have been due to religious or cultural reasons, where music was not widely embraced. “The singers now left the Persians and Byzantines”: This suggests that Arab musicians and singers began to draw inspiration from the musical traditions of neighbouring cultures, such as the Persians and Byzantines. They started to incorporate elements from these traditions into their own music. The dances that enhanced those gatherings were performed by solo female dancers handling scarves and swords or by groups that displayed choreographic scenes like the Kurradj (the hobby-horse dance) that was in great favour among the Andalusians.<sup>2</sup>

It (singing) is also the first to disappear from a given civilisation when it disintegrates and retrogresses. This perspective reflects a historical pattern where the development of art and culture often follows the satisfaction of basic needs. As societies advance, they can dedicate more time and resources to the enrichment of their cultural and artistic expressions, and singing is seen as one of the final crafts to be cultivated in this progression. It also highlights the role of leisure and joy in the refinement of artistic skills, suggesting that these pursuits are valuable for their contribution to the overall quality of life in a civilisation. The disappearance of singing within a civilisation can be seen as an indicator of its overall health and stability. When a society is thriving, it can afford to invest in cultural and artistic endeavours. Conversely, a decline in singing’s presence may signify social unrest, economic challenges, or a general decline in the quality of life.

### **Craft of Music: Stability, Modernity and Urbanization**

When a city is still developing and not fully set up, people only focus on getting what they need to live, like food. Once the city is organised and there are enough workers and resources to cover these needs, people start spending extra money on things that are not essential, like luxuries. Crafts and sciences come from humans’ ability to think, which makes us different from animals. The need for food is more basic and comes first because it is necessary for survival. Only after people have enough food and resources do they start focusing on more advanced crafts and sciences. As societies grow wealthier, they improve these crafts to fit their needs for luxury and comfort. In simpler or less developed societies, people only need basic crafts, like those of carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, butchers, and weavers. These crafts are simple and not very advanced because they are only needed for daily life.<sup>3</sup> When a society is not yet fully settled and organised, people primarily focus on basic needs like getting food, such as wheat and other essentials. However, as the city becomes more structured, the workforce grows, and there is more than enough to meet everyone’s basic needs; the extra resources are used for luxurious things. In a small

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<sup>1</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 470.

<sup>2</sup> Shiloah, Amnon. *The Meeting of Christian, Jewish and Muslim Musical Cultures on the Iberian Peninsula*: Acta Musicologica, International Musicological Society 1991, Page 17.

<sup>3</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 469.

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or Bedouin civilisation, only basic crafts are necessary, particularly those that cater to essential needs. These may include carpentry, blacksmithing, tailoring, butchering, or weaving. While these crafts do exist, they are not highly advanced or perfected. They only exist to the extent that they are required because they are a means to an end, serving practical purposes rather than being developed for their own sake.

Book producers are experts in the tasks of copying, binding, and editing books. The last craft that was stated is one that the urban luxury of intellectual issues demands.<sup>1</sup> As civilisation prospers and the demand for luxuries grows, it leads to the advancement and refinement of various crafts. These crafts are perfected with great skill, and additional ones are introduced in response to the requirements of luxury and societal conditions. Among these crafts are those of the shoemaker, the leather worker, the silk weaver, the goldsmith, and more. When civilisation reaches its zenith, these crafts are honed to their maximum potential. In cities, they become the primary means of livelihood for those who practice them, as urban luxury calls for these services. Furthermore, there are crafts such as perfumery, metalworking, bath attendance, culinary arts, baking, teaching music, dance, and rhythmical drumming, as well as book production, including copying, binding, and editing. The demand for the latter craft arises from the intellectual pursuits associated with urban life. Other similar crafts proliferate as civilisation becomes more advanced.

In more developed cities, like modern Spain, there are more complex crafts because of the extra wealth and luxury. This includes things like advanced building techniques, elaborate cooking, various types of music and dance, and making high-quality items for homes and special events. Even though Spain's overall civilisation might not be as advanced as other Mediterranean countries, it has a strong tradition in these areas because of its long history and stable past, including the influence of past dynasties.<sup>2</sup> Although the population of Tunis at the time did not seem to justify certain aspects of sedentary culture, a noteworthy connection between sedentary culture in Tunis and Spain was established when many people from eastern Spain, exiled in the seventh (thirteenth) century, settled in Tunis. Nevertheless, these customs remained firmly in place until their underlying basis ceased to exist.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 470.

<sup>2</sup> *The Muqaddimah*: Page 471.



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