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## Emanation of Chivalry ethics in Iranian Islamic Architectures

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### Abstract

Chivalry mores and etiquettes have never been limited to a specific time, place, or tradition, but the topic of discussion in this research holds some symbols of Chivalry mores in Iranian architecture in Islamic period. Chivalry principles, in Islamic period, are based on the pure nature of manliness and its origin and orientation goes back to Imams and prophets. By obeying and adherence to these principles, which have been called as Chivalry principles, people were categorized as the Chivalry. These mores have also been common in other countries such as Iraq, Anatoly, and today's Syria. In early Islamic period, Chivalry mores was only peculiar to some specific people, but as the time passed guilds also founded some rules based on Chivalry, which must have been obeyed by volunteers willing to join that guild. The place and footprint of mores and etiquettes of chivalrous people in Islamic architecture works were studied in this research. To do this, Chivalry appearances in the architecture of Islamic period buildings investigated. Relying on the comparative and analytical reasoning between the moral principles of the Chivalry and the Islamic architectural works, some results were gained. Some of them are the existence of internal spaces, taken from the idea of confidentiality of the Chivalry and leaving the doors shorter in Islamic architecture of some structures like Zurkhaneh (gymnasium), to illustrate the humility and modesty while entering into such places.

**Key words:** *chivalrous, Islamic architecture, moral principles, Chivalry mores*

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## Introduction

In the scope of traditional Arts of Iran, architecture has had a sublime position. About the meaning of architect, Dehkhoda has mentioned that: a mason steward and wise of science, a mason that gives the instructions to building master, master of masons, elder of masons, a great builder, and the one who builds and causes the boom and excellence (Dehkhoda, 1998, 21184). It is significant for the Islamic Iranian architecture in which moral principles and factors have been considered. In fact, in this kind of art, there is a return to the origin of tradition, not just a display of it (Bemanian, 2007, 48). These principles are originated from heavenly and spiritual beliefs of Iranians, and it has been present without any historical discontinuity due to practice and truth seeking, modernization of Iranians in contact with other civilizations based on Islamic-Iranian worldview, in the cultural context and with constant dynamism, refinement, and evolvement (Naghi zadeh, 2000, 4). In order to grow and thrive in a society where Islamic moral principles are dominant, Islamic art observes and knows human in all dimensions and by considering all aspects, balance will be maintained (Mohadesi, 2007, 86). In some works of Islamic architecture, the type of architecture indicates the moral of chivalries (Mohajeri, 1981, 120). Followers of chivalry mores have been in Iran traditionally, and after Islam and especially in the first Islamic centuries, they have played important roles in social changes and political history of Iran. At first, chivalry mores and joining this group was not public; But with the passage of time, every guild established its rules based on the chivalry principle. In the present study, it has been tried to address moral signs of chivalries hidden in Islamic chivalry.

### The concept of chivalry

In Moin dictionary, it has been written about the meaning of Chivalry as 1- Chivalry 2-munificence, mercy, generosity 3-manliness, manhood, 4- sacrifice. It means that if he sacrifices

others for him, it is an ambitious sacrifice. In addition, it is a degree of self- sacrifice. He must try for others, make them superior than him, ignore their faults, and act upon justice with all of them (Moin dictionary). The Arabic word of chivalry implies the concept of youth. Its Persian equivalence is chivalry. The chivalries emerged in Iran in the beginning of the fourth century AH/ tenth AD and the chivalry principles have been developed in the fifth century AH (Karbon, 2004, 3). In Islamic countries, chivalry was privileged with a set of rituals and traditions. Imam Ali (as) had a special respect among the chivalries. Some of the prophets are superior to others in being chivalry. Amongst, Ibrahim Khalil-ur-Rahman has been mentioned as Abolfatyan (father of chivalries) and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as seyed Al -Fatyan (master of chivalries) (Riyadh 2003, 21).

The purpose of chivalry is to transfer the main light of nature from potential to actual. Therefore, in chivalry, the base is cultivation of the heart and soul. Generosity and mercy are the highest degrees of chivalry (Karbon, 2004, 24). A chivalry should have some features such as generosity, humility, mercy, amnesty, no ego, alertness, faithfulness, being secretive, and optimism to the people of God and keeping their respect and making angle ( so that passengers will be informed of their presence. In fact, chivalry is a guide for passengers). A chivalry must defend his compatriot and fellow. If someone seeks him refuge, he should harbor him and sacrifice his life to defend the vicinity and support the harbor. He must not to encroach someone else's honor, but, his hand, heart and life must be clean, his promise must be correct. They accept whoever wants them, and do not wish for the person who does not want them. They do not reject a discipline by staying and do not approximate foreigners to service them (Karbon, 2004, 11). The candidate of chivalry must have seven conditions including manhood and maturity, wisdom and Islam moral endurance and compassion

and modesty (Riyadh, 2003, 59). Principles of prophecy and imamate have been connected to chivalry, and that is why these mores are attributed to the Imams and prophets. Three great stages (levels) have been mentioned for prophecy: - Adam prophet (AS) (starting point) - Ibrahim prophet (AS):- pole - Muhammad prophet (PBUH): the seal.

There are also three levels for chivalry: -origin: Ibrahim Prophet (AS) - Imam Ali (AS): pole - the last Imam (AS): seal.

#### **The levels of execution of ceremonies in chivalrous group:**

- accepting members in chivalrous group. - Drinking Tun (Tun drinking was wine in the era before Islam. However, after the Islamic period, to continue the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), it has been accompanied with drinking water and salt or milk and salt.). - wearing special clothes of chivalrous (Plinth and belt). Each of these levels has a special meaning that can be summarized as - water: refers to knowledge and wisdom (a person can achieve it based on pure and natural talent lying in his nature). -salt: refers to the feature of justice and fairness (Pre-condition of inner balance). Wearing plinth: refers to the virtue of chastity and decency (it must be acted out as the first step to enter to chivalry group). Fastening belt: refers to ritual of courage and zeal (it means what it is for chivalry and prepares him to serve in the group of chivalries) (Karbon, 2003, 23).

There is a hierarchy among chivalries including: - ancestor: was as a pole among the Sufis. - Great: made members to drink salt and water in the ceremony of Drinking Tun. -defendant: he does some of the works on behalf of the great. -elder of tribe: was selected by the eldest of chivalries to query moods and lives of chivalries and meet their needs. In the oldest chivalry letters, it has been mentioned among the conditions for the chivalry rank that the brother must be a businessperson. Each group of occupations, in chivalry, considered an elder as a guardianship. They fastened the scarf with

his name, opened their shops with his name, and called his name in prays, and the elderly was considered as supporter of the industry. Among elders, Mohammad Ibn Abu-Bakr has been mentioned as the elder of architects (Gulpinarli, 2000, 121). Consequently, in an Islamic society, an artist knew himself committed to ethical principles in the construction (Nasr, 1968).

#### **3- Islamic art and architecture**

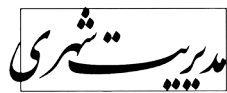
Islamic art is an art from the Islamic and holy metaphors and concepts (Burckhardt, 1986, 17). The art is obtained directly form orders of the holy Quran and / or Islamic narrations. In the art that is retrieved from Islam, the base is thought and this thought is belief in comprehensiveness of Quran. It tells: human can find all his needs in Quran. As Karl Douri says, "Islamic art has a high and impressive base and it is the source of all activities of Muslims in the world. Essentially, monotheism is the source of relevancy of artist to his art, and a Muslim artist uses just one valuable source that is Quran "(Douri, 1989, 3).

Islamic architecture has had a special value and attention over the centuries and has had a type of spirituality. In Islamic architecture, the form and content of architecture has been influenced by the intellectual content of the community. People- orientation, avoiding idleness, static knowledge, self-sufficiency and introversion are some of features of Islamic Iranian architecture (Pirnia, 1990, 22). Besides, some adjectives such as clarity, moderation, dignity, wholeness and balance can be mentioned as features of Islamic architecture.

Islamic architecture can be recognized by the religion of the builder. Therefore, the architect's religion is representative of type of his architecture. In practice, Islamic architecture is an element independent from the Islam, so that Ernest Kunel knows the form and framework of Islamic architecture as the result of physical rules, climate features, mores, and physical functions of the related building (Kunel, 1966, 6).



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#### 4- Ethics and Architecture

In the era after the Islam emergence, the architecture of Muslims was introduced as a great part of cultural and artistic heritage of the Islam world. God centeredness role of Muslim architects in the development of Islamic architecture can be known as one of the features of this architect. Islamic architecture relies on spiritual beliefs of people of this land. In Iran, by arrival of Islam and occurrence of changes in the structure of society, we also saw changes in the type of architecture that changed the type of architecture to Islamic architecture. In each period, considering the dominant political conditions, a few changes are observed in architecture, but, totally, the basis is compliance with a set of principles called Islamic morality, and architect always considers this principle. This trend continued until the Qajar era. In Qajar era, communication of Iran with other countries and imitating them in architecture led to an alternation in the type of Islamic architecture and gradually the type of foreign architecture became an inbound and imposed element on the culture of Iran's people.

To know the nature of Islamic society, it is required to have a correct understanding of morality principles. Arts in Islamic societies have been based on unity and uniqueness (Nasr, 1968). Islamism of Islamic art is a spiritual and intangible issue (Mazloumi, 196, 1983).

In the present study, our objective is to study architecture and art of east and their morality principles. East means a spiritual culture that has been established based on religious and divine teachings. This east, totally, is in opposition and confrontation with west and western culture with the base of refusal of divine, holy, and spiritual issues or tradition (Gonun, 1986, 96). Undoubtedly, in traditional civilizations, there was not any fully unreligious art (Shuan, 1997, 96). During the history of Islam, Iran has always been one of the main centers of Islamic art and Iranian architecture is one of the richest fields of its manifestation (Nasr, 1991, 60). An Iranian artist was always modest,

and he knew himself as unified with his society. Iranian artist, totally, respects elders and continuing their way satisfies and pleases him as much as possible (Poup, 2002, 75).

Some of the chivalries have been living in cities unlike knighthoods (Ayyaran) and they pass their lives by crafts working and business market. They called each other and especially their masters as "my bother" (Afshari, 2005, 26). At first, chivalry was at the service of mysticism and "elders" (Kolu) were at the top of business and occupations. They were man of journeying and wayfaring and they trained and guided artists. Gradually, chivalry mores passed the mysticism, some mores were set for all the occupations and businesses, and the secrets of these occupations were passed from generation to generation under the cover of religious mores (Karbon, 1992, 166). In letter of chivalry written by Shah Al-Din Omar Sohrevardi, it is mentioned that – master or owner must always have open arms to generosity and compassion and sacrifice. He must not refrain and hesitate anything from others and students and the door of his house (chivalry house) must always be open for everybody by the custom of angle and anchor. Passengers should never find the door of chivalry house closed.

In chivalry letters, artists groups such as architects have been mentioned. In the groups that are somehow the spiritual brothers of industrial groups, the process of teaching skills and delicacy working has always accompanied with gradual refinement in spiritual journeying. Islamic art always has the divine smell. In Boukhardt's idea: in the view of Islam, divine art is, first of all, a manifestation of divine unity in the beauty and order of the universe. In Islamic art and architecture, art is as a bridge between material and spiritual worlds. In that period, religion dominated on all aspects of humans' lives and humans were trying to adjust their lives in accordance with the desire of their idol. A Muslim architect tried his best to make his building closer to the perfect man

and build it based on internal face of a perfect man.

In the following, it is required to address some points about the Islamic architecture of mosques and residences that are connected with the chivalry moralities. More than other arts, architecture is connected to the reality of culture, life, dignity, and human way of living and social life of man. Architecture of a mosque or of a personal house of a Muslim person is different in design and plan, but there is not any difference in style and method of these two buildings. House is a place for worship and the ceremonies performed in mosque will be performed here (Bourkhadt, 1991, 19). In fact, in architecture, we face with types of holy, public, and private places that are all connected to each other regarding architecture and form and body. In past, urban spaces had a very important role in individual, family, local and urban life of people, and many of the public, group and collective activities were held in them.

In Islamic architecture, "avoidance of idleness" and unwarranted glory has been addressed. Using more than needed sizes leads to wasting materials and increasing costs and uncertainty about the stability of the building (Masaeli, 2009, 27). In Islamic architecture, it has always been considered that in creating a building, height of building should not be higher than minarets of mosque. Islamic architecture is drawn from the language of Quran and is indicative of the depth and richness of the Islam religion. The relation of architecture with the Islam shows the belief in monopolism, faith, and acting out the teachings and trainings of Islam. Islamic architecture was an art that was used not only in religious places such as mosques, but also in schools, shrines, palaces and even houses and bathrooms.

In Islamic architecture, there is a harmony among various religious and non-religious buildings and the available decorations in them. Amongst, mirror working, molding, and tiling can be mentioned. The mentioned deco-

rations do not have just decorative aspects, but they have more important function and they complete each other. In Islamic art, a Muslim artist, and architect do not apply anything just for the sheer beauty, but they make what is required and essential, yet beautiful (Pir nia, 1990, 22).

In architecture, entrance is a transmission or connector space. It means that entrance is considered as the connector between the outer space to inner space (Soltan Zadeh, 1991, 170). In creation and designing the portal of the mansion and gardens, Islamic architecture tried to make the porters proportionate with the significance of the building (Soltan zadeh, 2005, 55). In porters of some of the buildings, using human and animal designs were avoided because of religious rules. Of course, in many cases, the porters of bathrooms were decorated with the designs of Rostam, Afrasiyab and other scenes of Shahnameh. In Islamic architecture, name of Imam Ali (AS) has been the decoration of buildings in the form of pictographs and inscriptions.

In architecture of mosques, considering the dominant religious space, the architect sets the portal parallel to the axis of Qibla and in a location close to the axis of symmetry of the courtyard of the mosque. This is considered as the main entrance of mosques (the same, 27). In architecture of mosques that are so-called Iranian, two main types are recognized about the entrance from out into the yard. In the first type: entrance to yard is from one of the subsidiary fountains and in one of the corners of the courtyard and among the most significant samples, Isfahan central Mosque, central Mosque of Ardestān, Aghanour Mosque of Isfahan, Isfahan Hakim Mosque, the mosque of Sheikh Ali Khan Zanganeh of Isfahan, Hama-dan central Mosque can be mentioned. In the second type: the entrance of mosque is in the pack section of one, two, or all the three secondary balconies. Among the most significant samples, Moshirolmolk Shiraz Mosque, Imam Mosque in Isfahan, Shiraz Vakil Mosque, Nabi



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Mosque of Qazvin, Qazvin central Mosque, Imam Mosque of Boroujerd, Imam Mosque in Semnan can be mentioned. In this type, after the entrance porter and vestibule, we will enter to the exactly the back part of one of the three secondary balconies. However, entrance to this balcony is blocked by Persian (Bricklayer lattice walls with pride and median) faker (baked clay) and median (some nets in the walls of religious places) and Pa chang (a small gate). In fact, it must be stated that the duty of this member is prevention of direct entrance and is, at the same time, a visual connection to aggravate the desire of approaching and enthusiasm of meeting. In addition, it is like a "cover between witness and witnessed" (Beheshti, 1995, 35). The era when Islamic architecture was at the peak of its growth and blossoming, architecture made a proper spiritual connection with human needs, living and social conditions of its time.

Doors of some buildings such as traditional gymnasium (Zurkhaneh) etc. were short and a person must bend his head to be able to enter to such places.

In designing and setting the entrances of residences, the architect always considered that the dint in front of door must make an interesting and appealing state with the adjoining body, and each passenger or observer will be attracted to it (Soltan zadeh, 2005, 23). In architecture of Islamic houses, the entrance of these houses is opened toward the inside of the house. It shows that house is considered as the country of the person, and it is here that his privacy, respect, and secrets are maintained. Presence of knobs on the doors was simply for informing. There were two knobs on the entrance doors and each of them was installed on each door companion. One of them called hammer produced bass sound and it was used when the visitor was a man. Another knob, which was usually called as ring, produced treble sound and when the visitor was a woman, it was used. In fact, presence of such knobs would inform the proprietor about the gender

of the visitor (Soltan Zadeh, 2005, 92). In Iranian and Islamic architecture, architect pays a lot attention to the water fountain in the center of building and entry of light into the building and he took care of them. Islamic teachings followed by Iranian culture introduce water as the reason of life of everything. As mentioned in the holy Quran "we made everything alive by water". It is implied from the verse that it means water has a full authority in the lives of live creatures "(Tabatabaie, Al-mizan interpretation). In the secret language of mystics, "water is the secret of light of life that penetrates and streams throughout the world at every moment. The bed of river is an example to determine the direction of the whole water currency" (nasr, 1980,134).

Hierarchy is one of the fundamental principles applied in traditional arts. In architecture, observing hierarchy is seen in the buildings. Hierarchy means organizing and combining spaces and elements according to some of the body features or their functions that lead to creation of hierarchy in placement or use or view of the elements. Function and connection of outer space to inner space are some of examples of the hierarchy. In addition, other functions and activities such as changing direction, stop, forward, importation, distribution and determining the route or the routes, moving into the interior space have components according to your specification (the same, 106).

Placement of family members in the spaces and rooms of traditional house are also determined based on considering justice and age of people and respecting to elders. Therefore, according to prestige of each person, the place of family member is determined mentally in the three- door, five- door rooms and hall. In addition, the residents find their place using their meta-awareness. Therefore, internal classification of the space is done mentally according to two vertical axis and placement of people on the axis or both sides of axis are determined in proportionate with the respect and age of people. Moreover, this order and priority are

considered at the time of sleeping and placing around the food table (Masaeli, 2008, 27). In traditional view, "human lives in a world that has just one origin and one center". He is fully aware of the origin. The origin that includes perfection, eternal purity, and integrity so that the traditional human want to seek it, regain it and transfer it "(Nasr, 2001, 133).

## 5. Conclusion

In constructing Islamic building, an Islamic architect has always paid attention to Iranian culture values that are inspired by Islamic worldview. The traditional architect constructs a house based on his pure nature and relying on the principles of religion. The present study had some conclusions leading to compliance of chivalry moral elements in Islamic architecture, as the following:

One of the most important principles recommended by religion about family and social relations is covering view and creating privacy; as it is mentioned in Quran: tell believing men and women to refrain their eyes from looking at strangers and do not reveal their adornment except what is apparent. In chivalry, this subject is compatible with the feature of exaggeration in concealing the head and keeping it. Another observed example of chivalry in architecture is reverence and respect for the dignity that is related to privacy and mental relaxation. In Islamic architecture, the plan of houses is introverted. In such houses, the possibility of surrounding and dominating from outside to inside of the house is canceled. In addition, the center of house and the central yard are safe from the noise of alley and public spaces. Such segregation and independence of house from the surrounding environment leads to bringing inner relaxation. Presence of knobs on the doors that guests use to ask for permission to enter to the house is aligned with the moral adjective of chivalries that was mentioned earlier in the text "They accept whoever wants them, and do not wish for the person who does not want them. They do not reject a discipline by staying and do not ap-

proximate foreigners to service them". Doors of some buildings such as traditional gymnasium (Zurkhaneh) etc. were short and a person must bend his head to be able to enter to such places. This is in order to create a tribute and submission of entrant to that location and refers to humility of chivalries. Water fountain is a reflection of sky and nature for human in the architecture of traditional houses or in mosques. Light and water are both fully linked to human. Of course, the reality of water is a level of the light truth levels. This link and courtship of water and light is observed in mosque and traditional houses of Iran and it is a reference to a moral attribute of chivalries, which is one of the levels of joining to the chivalries rank. Water refers to knowledge and wisdom (a person can achieve it based on pure and natural talent lying in his nature).

Strong roots of chivalry mores are in the beliefs and culture of people of Iran. A chivalry must be beneficial for his society. People-centeredness and being at the service of people refer to the tint in front of the buildings. This platform is at the service of people because of being a place to rest. The platforms point to generosity and mercy of chivalries. In the architecture of mosques, we face with the subject of not allowing direct entry to the courtyard of the mosque from centerpiece funds of courtyard. This subject is also observed in traditional houses. It is same in the gardens, for example Fin garden in Kashan. In garden and house that are private buildings and twisting corridors leading to the yard is because of keeping privacy of yard and separation from the public arena. This subject is aligned with the trait of being secretive of chivalries.

How to enter to Fin garden of Kashan

Islamic architecture shows us space and type of life and Islamic way and human-centeredness way. Modesty of family is respected in this way. In the persistent, dense, and introspective urban areas, house is private space for a family life. The privacy principle was usually considered in design and construction of

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a house so that family members can be protected against illegal people's eyes. No ego is seen in the simple appearance of buildings. A person who pays attention to his external existence will never achieve truth. Placement of family members inside the spaces and rooms of the residence is based on considering justice and age of people and respecting to elders. Therefore, according to prestige of each person, the place of family member is determined mentally in the three- door, five- door rooms, and hall that refer to hierarchy (ancestor, great, defendant, and elder of tribe). Following the religious and social Islamic architecture, the entrance is designed in a form that they will not enter to the internal space suddenly and there will not be any direct view on the internal spaces from the entrance space. This subject is also aligned with the hierarchy of chivalries.

In Islamic building and architecture, balanced is considered. In everything, materials are used as much as needed. It is compatible with considering the lives and souls and times of chivalries. When an architect designs for human societies, at first, he must believe in human and humanity. This is the feature of being at the service of people.

When societies are changing, the set of past value systems such as the dominant rules among people of society will be invalidated. In Iran, by entering to a modern society, ethics and cultural resources and mores in the community that have been extracted from chivalry may fade out. By the afore-mentioned concepts, it can be concluded that Islamic architecture has been bounded to moral models in its design. In conduction, according to historical documents and evidences, architects and engineers were members of chivalries and men of pray. The chivalry letter of builders is a testament of this subject.

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