

## **Cultural and Social Concepts of the Inscriptions of the Sardar Qazvin School-Mosque**

### **Abstract**

The Sardar Qazvin School-Mosque in Qazvin is one of the architectural works remaining from the Qajar period. This structure beholds inscriptions that reflect various concepts. Throughout the history of Iranian architecture in the Islamic era, the art of calligraphy witnessed a significant place in inscriptional arts that observe aesthetic values. In a number of cases, the message of the architectural space is conveyed through the use of inscriptions. In this way, in the decoration of the facade, both in terms of appearance and from the spiritual point of view, by using the names of the Imams, the noble verses of the Holy Quran and the poetry of praise all significantly grant a distinct shape and form to historical structures. In the meantime, it is vital to study the nature of the inscriptions of Sardar Mosque-School in terms of conceptual values. In this regard, a thematic study of the calligraphy used in the mosque-school of Sardar Qazvin based on cultural and social themes should be presented. Therefore, the location of the inscriptions, the content of the hadiths and poems and the reason for choosing each have been considered. The research method is interpretive-historical and the argument is inferential. The findings of the research indicate that in this mosque-school, all varieties of inscriptions have been used in religious and epic themes. By studying these inscriptions, common cultural and social patterns in the quality of social and artistic interactions of the Qajar period are revealed.

### **Research aims:**

- ١- Identifying the concepts and socio-cultural themes of the texts in the inscriptions of the Sardar Qazvin school-mosque.
- ٢- Achieving a historical understanding of the artists and poets who participated in the construction of the Sardar Qazvin school-mosque.

### **Research questions:**

١- What are the socio-cultural themes used in the inscriptions of Sardar Qazvin school-mosque?

٢- What was the thinking of artists and poets in constructing the Sardar Qazvin school-mosque during the Qajar period?

**Keywords:** Inscription, Calligraphy, Cultural and Social Themes, Sardar Qazvin School-Mosque, Qajar Period.

## **Introduction**

Islamic art is a reflection of the spirit and culture of Islam and has always been attuned with the spirit of Islam, and this compatibility is shown at least in the foremost manifestations, such as the architecture of holy places. In this manner, the architecture of holy places such as mosques, schools and the threshold of the shrine of the Infallible Imams (AS) was decorated with the most stunning manner by the creators of such art. Among the aesthetic elements, inscriptions that reflect the aesthetic tendencies of art and the direct connection between culture, religion and national prestige can be mentioned. The art of calligraphy and inscription, due to its sanctity in the history of Islam, despite all the stylistic differences and regional diversity of writings, has been used as a decorative element in all eras to unify diverse categories of structures. Inscriptions are a means of conveying a message to reflect the word of God, the sayings of the Imams and Islamic prayers. The inscriptions were also made of different materials depending on the time and place of their location, such as calligraphy inscriptions, framed inscriptions, combined inscriptions with Islamic and geometric patterns, small brick inscriptions in the form of shapes and lines, for example in the Mihrab area, moreover, the inscriptions around the dome and the nave were of simple inscriptions created with brick or tile surfaces. Calligraphers, specifically Islamic calligraphers, believe in a kind of spiritual sanctity for the emergence of calligraphy and have the ability to perceive calligraphy as a transcendent belief. Attention to such issues will revive the theological spirit and aesthetic issues in the art of architecture. The necessity of this research is reviewing the fact that inscriptions present significant information regarding the construction history of the building, its founders, builders and artists. Inscriptions can be used to accurately clarify the purpose and plan of each building and building elements that have different functions in various structures and this

can to some extent reveal the reasons for its use and acquaint us with the social and cultural qualities of a historical period.

Regarding the research background, it should be said that an independent work with this title has not been written so far, but several researches on the themes of the inscriptions used in Iranian architecture have been written, the most important of which are the following: an article entitled "Thematic study of the literary inscriptions of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS)" written by Mahnaz Shayestehfar in ۱۳۸۷ explores the historical role of the court of Imam Reza (AS) attracting artistic elites and getting acquainted with the historical antiquity of Imam Reza's Shrine, as well as recognizing the works of poets of the holy shrine and its analysis in the Qajar period. In another paper by Shayestehfar published in ۱۳۹۲, the themes of the calligraphy applied in the Prophet's Mosque in Qazvin were reflected upon by relying on religious themes, content of the verses and hadiths.

In another research study by Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Zarei written in ۱۳۹۳ entitled "Study of the inscriptions of the mosque-school of Darul Hassan Sanandaj with emphasis on examples of Persian poetry" focuses on the relationship between works of art, architecture and literature especially Persian poetry and believes that main factor in the importance of Persian poetry in the inscription of this period is the opposition to the Ottoman invasion of Sanandaj, as a unifying factor by the founders. It can be concluded that by studying the contents of the inscriptions of Sardar Qazvin mosque-school, a part of the quality of socio-cultural conditions as well as the position of artists and poets in making these inscriptions in the Qajar period can be understood.

Sardar Qazvin Mosque-School is one of the mosques that was built during the Qajar period and is one of the largest mosques of the remaining schools in Qazvin. The most important book that has explanations in this regard is Mr. Golriz's book *Minodar* and nearly all quotations are from this book. While the architecture of Sardar Qazvin mosque-school can be discussed from different dimensions, one of which can be the use of themes used in the calligraphy of this school mosque.

## **Conclusion**

The Sardar Mosque-School in Qazvin is one of the largest and most magnificent mosque-schools in Qazvin in terms of architectural structure and elegance in the selection and execution of its inscriptions. In the construction of the mosque-school of Sardar Qazvin, the lines that have been

used on the entrance levels and the bodies of the main courtyard, in addition to mentioning the name of the client and artist and the date of construction and how it is attached, it is applied to record sacred and religious expressions such as the description of Hazrat Ali, the praise of the founders and their descriptions, and mainly the praise of the event of Karbala presented through the use of poems from the Divan of Mohtasham Kashani, Sabahi Bidgoli and Mirza Ahmad Jandaghi. Considering the use of most of the inscriptions in connection with the praise of Ashura, it seems that the position of virtue and spiritual status of the Imams, especially Imam Hussein (AS) in the religious and educational processes of the Qajar period has been important and valuable. On the other hand, the use of epic poems in describing the event of Karbala can indicate that in the Qajar period in terms of social and cultural aspects, the spirit of martyrdom and courage was one of the characteristics of this period. Considering that the main lines used in the inscriptions of this school mosque are of the Nasta'liq type, and as mentioned in the theoretical foundations, the use of this type of line in the inscriptions is a completely Iranian calligraphy, which is a symbol of Unity and also a sign of identity; in addition, to inscribe Persian poems with such calligraphy that is entirely Iranian and artistic reached its peak during this period. Also, the use of poems by the Divan of Mohtasham Kashani, Sabahi Bidgoli and Mirza Ahmad Jandaghi, which have been familiar concepts for the people of this period, indicates that the poetry of this age is intertwined with an epic and religious approach.

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