



**THE REASONS OF DECLINING TREND OF ISLAMIC-IRANIAN
ARCHITECTURE**

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ABSTRACT

Iran holds great architectural legacy. It has been nearly 1250 years B.C. from the time Choghazanbil Zigurat, the most ancient architectural construction was founded and there is more than a period of 3000 years behind us until the threshold of the contemporary era. During all this long period, a powerful and significant activity has been existed constantly and continuously in the country and a number of valuable art works have been created at any parts of this land. These remarkable works have been played great roles in forming and promoting the global architecture in various historical periods of time. The history of Iran architecture is basically divided into two main parts including the architecture before and after Islam. Islam which was settled roughly about 1400 years ago in Iran affect architectural works of after islam of iran based on its specific worldview and gives new quality to it, therefore a firm link has been created between these two parts of the architecture of Iran. Although the architecture of Iran couldn't maintain its outstanding location in the architecture of the globe after Safavid era, namely around 400 years ago, it has in fact a declining process in this angle. However, in spite of this declining process, a number of valuable architectural artworks have been created in these years until the beginning of the contemporary architecture of Iran. The objective of this issue is not to mention the repetitive points, but also it is about revision and submission of new horizons in the field of bases of contemporary architecture design. The approach of the writing has been qualitative and data collection method was library studies and the historical interpretative strategy has been

considered. Moreover, the changes of the next eras after the Safavid have been studied due to importance of the issue in this research. In addition, the works of Seyyed Hadi Mir Miran have been studied as case study due to their significance. The conclusion has been made by arranging the key factors next to each other and induction. The final section of the article includes certain proposals in order to achieve the form origin in the contemporary architecture of Iran.

Keywords: Architecture, Islamic Iranian, Decline reasons, Contemporary

INTRODUCTION

Iran holds great architectural legacy. From the time of building Choghanbil Ziggurat, the most ancient architectural construction was founded and there is more than a period of 3000 years behind us until the threshold of the contemporary era. During all this long period, a powerful and significant activity has been existed constantly and continuously in the country and a number of valuable art works have been created at any parts of this land. These remarkable works have been played great roles in forming and promoting the global architecture in various historical periods of time.

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to it therefore a firm link has been created between these two parts of the architecture of Iran.

Both parts of Iran architecture, whether before the Islam including two long golden times of Achaemenid and Sasanid or after Islam which has at least a continuous evolution of thousand years until the Safavid era are known as the most remarkable sections of the architecture history.

Although the architecture of Iran has been able to maintain its place in the architecture of the globe after the Safavid Era, namely around four hundred years ago and it has actually a declining process, a number of valuable architectural artworks have been created through these years until the beginning of contemporary architecture of Iran.

Evolution in the History of Iran Contemporary Architecture:

Usually, in the west, especially in Europe, certain periods of the second parts of the eighteenth century (beginning of Industrial

Revolution) by the early decades of the twentieth century have been studied. Since then, it is considered the advent of Contemporary Architecture or Modern Architecture in which modern movement takes global form. (the main reasons of Modern Architecture creation are considered taste change, constructitional developments in terms of science or techniques as well as in the theories and new attitudes to the world).

Now, the process of the above mentioned study regarding Iran Contemporary Architecture was equal to the early twelfth century, namely the Afsharid era, but by knowing our country history, nothing was heard of Industrial Revolution in this period of time.

In research to choose a date and origin for this issue, we find the architecture has been understandable and analytical as a unified collection. Outline and implementation of the buildings used to change by the employers and architects by various time and place conditions, but the whole working process suggests a balance between society and architecture and only the details have been changed based on the taste of the architects or employers. Changes or differences have been at level of architecture explanation.

It is not possible to separate the architect from the society by this time, the architect has been one of the society members.

In the following, we could adhere to the typical method of art history to the modern architecture advent in which the main issues are formal values considering mainly the quality and forms relations. On the other hand, from the mid Qajar era, the relationship between architecture and society has been gradually changed and reached to its highest level at Pahlavi era.

Here, it is possible to study various forms of the architecture in the passed eras and discuss various artists or specific styles by these forms changes and evolution, but they all form a small section of architectural events and contemporary culture because in addition of the social changes and evolutions, new issues are raised apart from the old customs which are placed at the first level of importance.

Thus, we should extend the studies domain, the changes can be considered in various economic, social and technical fields and their effects on architecture can be evaluated. These factors have not tangible effect on architecture, by raising new materialistic and spiritual requirements, new tools, a type of new architecture is raised as different from past architecture.

Regarding Iranian contemporary architecture, we can consider one sample and three time sections.

The samples with a turning point in the changes of Iran architecture and building of Karim Khan Zand Shirazi Divankhane, we can refer to three features not existing in Iranian architecture on that time:

First, stone masonry of walls, second gilding in the ceiling and third, as important than two other features with the importance of technical and executive changes in practice, Shirvani coverage as prevalent in Iranian architecture can be considered.

The three period of time are as below, respectively:

- 1- The initial evolutions in Qajar era.
- 2- The evolutions of Nassereddin Shah's era.
- 3- Reza Shah's era.

The Initial Evolutions of Qajar Era:

Tehran of Shah Tahmasb is delegated to Aghamohammad Khan and he considers Tehran as the capital of Iran and then Fatalishah continued his kingdom. The form relations with foreign countries and foreign trips were started. These relations led into the establishment of foreign embassies with the architectural style of the countries as effective on the changes of Iranian architecture. The first group of students was sent to London and this group

returned to Iran in 1941 as engineer, doctor and Teachers.

The constructional and urban features of Tehran city at that time were:

- The fence of Shah Tahmasebi with four gates remained and the city didn't need any development.
- The major materials of buildings were dried mud, brick and stone, the coverage was dome in specific and religious and public areas and also wooden beam was used.
- Doors and windows are fully made of wood.
- Joinery works generally include plastering with decoration and painting on it.
- Construction of nobles houses as Andaruni or Biruni.

1- Second, The Evolutions of Nassereddin Shah's Era

At that period, due to development of communications, some changes were made in all fields and architecture is also considered.

One of the first works of these changes is development of Darolkhelafe to control Tehran city, determination of new domain, establishment of squares, markets and new type of architecture, as motel. Also, we can refer to some factories in Tehran. Although the buildings were established by the order of Shah, also the court authorities and

merchants had major role. This growth required more materials but the major materials were soil as used like dried mud and brick in building construction. From building techniques, this period had no difference with the previous period. The coverage of ceiling was dome and wooden beam. In finishing, baked gypsum was used. The only technical progress in this era was lime in the foundation of buildings.

Due to building activity growth, the shortcomings were seen in skillful force. This created non-skillful artists and also it led into low quality of construction even in public and royal buildings. The decoration of building was coverage for these shortcomings and also dying the brick was common.

The main conducted projects in this period of time:

- Golestan Palace.
- Narenjestan building, Museum Hall
- Essential changes in windcatcher mason and Diamond Hall
- Abiz Palace
- Harem House and Nasser Dormitory
- Shamsolemareh pavilion which was made under the effect of european buildings and its initial outline was prepared by French and Austrian engineering.
- The European architecture in this building is observed by turning arch to

semi-circle as repeated in Kolah Farhangi house of Eshratatabad. Other buildings in semi-European styles were the buildings located in eastern angle of Topkhane square called King bank. Except the government buildings, the general trend of building construction was common also in different commercial, religious buildings and the important examples are school and Sepahsalar mosque as established by Moshiroldole in his personal house and it was also used to held the first parliament.

- Other famous buildings in this era are establishment of Darolfonun by Amir Kabir. The government place was constructed in eastern angle of Golestan palace. The government place was presented by French engineers. US embassy was also established in this era.

- After the assassination of Naseroldinshah to the constitutionalism order, all activities in architecture were with relative stagnation and this stagnation continued to the early Pahlavi era.

In general, colclusion of the characteristics of the buildings of this era could be summarized briefly as below:

- **Direct effect of some European criteira in the buildings of this era**
- **Using decorations and color inside and outside building namely as painting**

- **New spatial compositions in the general form of building**
- **Greater size of spaces**
- **Reduced precision in building construction**

Third, Reza Khan's era:

The start of contemporary architecture in Iran is imagined since 1300. The view of Iranian cities was changed and required buildings were created for new life as offices, factories, banks, railway, university and etc. and new residential units were created in cities. Despite the buildings before contemporary era as designed by traditional architects, were designed gradually by educated architects. They were non –Iranian architects and then gradually, the architects graduated from abroad and with the establishment of the first architecture school in Iran during 1320, Iranian graduated architects were added. On that time, contemporary architecture of Iran, past architecture was also considered and this consideration was emerged as different forms in various periods. During 1300 to 1320 in first Pahlavi, important architecture works were created by government and foreign architects. Special attention was given to past architecture namely in pre-Islam periods, Akhamanid and Sassanid era and other architectural works were created in which some elements of past architecture of

Iran after Islam were combined with European architecture elements. Except some limited works as Iran Museum, Maxim Syro and Andre Godar works were not valuable.

Based on the increase of the relationship between the government and west, more students were dispatched to abroad and some students were dispatched to learn architecture in Bozar school of France.

- Tehran University was established in 1934 and fine arts University in 1940.
- Formation of new Municipality in 1932 and towers of Tehran city were destroyed to establish streets and squares.
- The city area in 1929 was 24km², six times more than Fatalishah era in 1934, after five years to 46km² and 11 times more than Fatalishah era.
- Another is Compax Company to complete Railway.
- Santab company performing Meta bridge design in Ahvaz during 1927 to 1931.

Beam and cement were used as importing since 1932 in construction. Before than, Mossiou Markov applied beam in the post and Lintel, old railway or oil pipes were used in building construction. On that time, A Swiss Lecturer of materials resistance of Tehran University to use metal composite beam.

- In 1932, Shahi sugar factory was established with a combination of brick and concrete.

- In 1933, the first pre-stressed concrete bridge, Versak bridge in the north and Municipality building in the north of Topkhane square was built and at the same year, Ray cement factory was established.

- The design principles were based on two views: imitating the past or adaptation of architecture with new life

- The set of buildings around Dameshgh square is based on the first view: Telegraph building (imitating European neo-classicism), justice building (imitation of the past architecture), Bank Meli building (based on Akhamanid architecture), post building, Foreign affairs ministry (based on Kaba building in Akhamanid era), Shahrebani palace (based on Akhamanid architecture elements), Total registration building and national library are other examples of this approach. Also, ancient Iran musueme by Andre Godar as in its design, Taq Kasra was modelled. Firooz Bahram highschool. Anushirvan Dadgar high school and a part of Kalleg high school are architectures of this era.

The design of girls art school by Vartan Hovansian as an educated young architect from France and it won in 1935. This plan was a new movement in Iranian

architecture as based on modern architecture in the world and then this architecture was used in different residential, commercial and administrative and we observe the results now.

The next era started since 1941 and the second pahlavi era was started and it continued to the late 40s and important architecture works were built by some Iranian architects as Mohsen Forughi, Hushang Sihun and Abdolaziz Farmanfarmayin. In this era, the past architecture was taken into attention and it had better quality compared to the previous era and architecture geometry and models were used. Bualisina shrine in Hamedan by Hushang Seihun is one of the major works. Another era started in the late 40s and continued to Islamic revolution and it is at the same time with modern architects of final years. Some Iranian architects attempted to associate architecture with the past style of Iran. Some of the good examples are the efforts of work management education center as Nader Ardalan and contemporary arts museum of Kamran Diba.

Islamic revolution was with postmodern movements in the world and two issues created new era of architecture in Iran. First, architects attempted to direct architecture to architecture with independent identity based on pass legacy,

second postmodern architecture raised serious attention to past architecture of countries. Based on these two issues, the works in Iran and their postmodern architecture and style were based on past architecture elements (namely after Islam). Thus, their dealing with past architecture was not so deep and many postmodern architecture cliché elements were used in these works.

Two major points of contemporary architecture of Iran with specific attention to past architecture are as:

1- Iranian contemporary architecture had the concern of Iranian architecture history and made some efforts to associate with the past architecture.

2- Consideration of Iran contemporary architecture to the past architecture was apparent and deep attention to the general soul and its basics and using these principles were not used.

The link with the past and lack of basic achievement in an architecture movement as continuing the valuable architecture history of Iran and has a share in contemporary architecture in the world caused that in recent decade, some architects rely on past architects and created new attempts in start of contemporary architecture movement. Unfortunately, due to lack of association of these architects and lack of exchange of

views, this movement is not defined and its theoretical basics are not regulated.

At first, regarding architecture, we should refer to the important point that architecture in various countries and at different times was not separated and in a deep analysis of unified lines, all architecture works are associated in all countries. All works with architecture value as viewed at the same time have two major features:

First, architecture in the world has evolutionary trend and all elements are considered as the components of this evolutionary trend and the feature is evolutionary trend of public movement of architecture works to the general movement of the world.

Second, in all architecture works, there is a common aspect and it is creativity of these works. Creativity in architecture is based on two forms: One theoretical creativity, second spatial creativity as its architecture section. Any architecture work without creativity has no position in architecture history. Two mentioned features established great link among the architecture works in different countries and times and gave world quality in architecture. In the framework of this wide movement of architecture, the components were occurred in different times and countries and could get the taste of their country. Thus, architecture work has both

world quality (timeless and placeless) and also it has definite time and country quality. Strict border time segmentation like strict styles and borders of countries is not correct like architecture traditions. The globalization of architecture as unified is rejected. Here, we can perceive a deep association between Egypt Deyrolbahari temple and Kofman Write house and Lathurt temple with Seljuki mosque in Iran. By this introduction, we can avoid false image of traditional architecture belonging to a country separated from other countries and we can establish a link between architecture works of various countries and protect country features. We should consider this architecture movement belonging to Iran and in evolutionary trend of past of Iran and don't imagine it outside of general movement of current architecture. The theoretical basics of the first works in this movement were:

Architecture analysis in Iran shows that despite the variety and complexity of buildings, basics and models over time are used by various forms in this architecture and it is shown that Iranian architecture evolution is mostly based on the excellence of these principles and models. These models and principles can be used in current architecture of Iran and past architecture principles are used as basis.

Based on the analysis in elements and models of Iranian architecture, we can say the mentioned elements were created in a definite period of architecture history and by continuous presence in next periods were evolved and had independent identity of time and had emotional image. Some works are designed in which old architectural models are used with new interpretation and some of the examples are:

Three plans presented to culture center of Iran by Mirmiran, Ali Akbar Saremi and Darab Diba, sport center of Rafsanjan by Mirmiran, two plans presented for great museum of Khorasan history by Mohammad Amin Mirfendarski and common work of Mozghan Solati and Mohammad Hassan Momeni and visual arts art center of Karaj by Ali Akbar Saremi.

In the next plans of this movement, not only the architecture principles of Iran and models were considered, Iranian culture was also including Myths, concepts and cultural aspects focused on art as poetry and literature and they were used as creativity content of architecture work. We should consider that cultural concepts shouldn't be used directly in spatial creativity and be turned into architecture work and in thought creativity, they should pass abstract stage and be turned into

architecture ideas and then spatial creativity fulfills this architectural idea.

The major works in this trend are three plans presented to National library of Iran by Mirmiran, work of Kamran Safamanesh and Farhad Ahmadi, Terminal of Imam Khomeini airport by Bahram Shirdel., Shiraz Jahan Nama garden by Mohammad Reza Nasrin, National museum of Iran water by Mirmiran and Bahram SHirdel, Defa Moghadas Museum in Isfahan by Hossein Sheikh Zeinoldin and other plans.

Finally, we should add two major points for this type of architecture:

First, concepts, myths and other thought productions have high common concepts in various cultures and they are unified concepts as expressed in various countries. If architecture is used for visualization, architecture work can have the quality beyond definite country and it can be global, namely if the concepts are associated to general items of world.

Second, architecture forms and spaces at first are created for visualization of definite concepts and due to specific reason in form and space, namely the part of spatial creativity outside of control and awareness of designer, is declined to other concepts.

Based on experience, the higher the spatial and form power of architect, the more the ability to present various concepts. Based

on two points, if we consider some works of this movement, we can find the general soul of Iran and the initial concepts and it is not restricted to a definite country or a definite concept and we can feel its association with other countries and concepts and the works can be global.

CONCLUSIONS

If we discuss about the past, deprivation and regret can be observed namely about the issues referred in the process of paper:

Is it true? The reason of repetition of past works at this short time and taking examples and presenting recommendations and new way to improve Islamic Iranian architecture can be considered but it has been declining in the recent years. By investigation of ascending and descending growth and its reasons and issues in these years, we can achieve considerable methods to save Islamic architecture in the country and Iranian architecture of this unsuitable condition.

Some recommendations are presented in this regard:

- The investigation of the history of sample projects as designed, its success or failures, its stability and instability can be achieved by the study of their history.
- Before building construction forms, we can consider their development in future and based on changes in society and

population in these years, we can investigate them.

Mentioned models were created at definite periods but correlated presence in next periods was evolved and had identity independent from time and it was used to direct current works.

For modern construction, we don't need imitation from West and by investigation of history of architecture; we can establish local sustainability and accessibility of modern technology and specific attention to creativity, modern Iranian architecture style. We hope to find the true way of architecture.

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