The Spiritual Message of the Quranic verses in decoration of the tomb shrine Abraham in Babolsar City

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Abstract

Many Sadat's migrated from the land of the Arabic to Iran were chosen Mazandaran as a seat of government and a safe place for residence. Burial place of Sadat Shia is located in towns and villages of Mazandaran, as a Alavian's capital. In the history Those interested in prophet Mohhammad's family and also shia government have constructed magnificent tomb for propaganda and consolidation of Shia government. These tomb have protected valuable and important samples of Islamic art and architecture. One of the most important shrine that was considered by people, religious leaders and historians is shrine Abraham's tomb in Babolsar. In this tomb that is one of the 9th century hegira/15th century AD in Mazandaran, Beautiful and valuable Inscriptions and decorations, such as tile work, plaster barry, enshrine metal, wooden doors and grave fund, have been used in architectural decoration. Article purposes: Access to Quranic texts and religious Concept in decorations of holy Abraham in Babolsar. Recognizing the spiritual and religious Dimension of inscriptions and traditional art in the Abraham tomb. Article questions: Which Quranic Narratives and inscriptions are used in decorations of Abraham tomb? What is the spiritual message of Quranic verses and inscriptions in the decorations of Abraham holy tomb in Babolsar? Raw data has been collected from the research on Abraham holy tomb in babolsar. Additionally, written sources and documents are found in libraries. The descriptive-analytical researches method has been used to explain the data. According to the study Quranic inscriptions, names of God and geometric and herbal motifs in traditional art of this tomb are manifesting the otherwise concepts of Islam in shape of forms and colors in heaven space of studied tomb. These traditional arts and religious contents are reminding and are stabilizing muslim religious beliefs.

Keywords: "Quran", "architectural decoration", "BABOLSAR", "tomb shrine of Abraham". 
1. **Introduction**

Religions and customs combined with art to extend and be stable. Artistic expression which compatible with essence of religion identifies religion architecture in field of architecture and crafts. Iranian-Islamic traditional architecture and art gains its prosperity and development in the context of religion ideas and believes. This project has studied decorative elements used in Holy Sepulcher Abraham of Babolsar to recognize Islamic architecture and art of Iran north special Mazandaran.

City of Babolsar is one of Mazandaran coastal cities which was called Mashhadsar since solar 1315. The city called in the name because there was Holy Sepulcher Abraham, brother of imam Reza, in the city. Because Holy Sepulcher Abraham head there is in Mashhadsar and his body buried in Amole Holy Sepulcher Abraham, but Stodeh said: "sar" word means place and position [1]. This matter cannot be correct and "Mashhadsar" word is similar to "sakhtsar", "roodsar" and "gachsar" and its meaning is place and position of Mashhad not Mashhad and a monument for "sar" word. It has referred to shipping correspondence, Holy Abraham building and his sister monument in the small port town in history sources and itineraries such as Marashi family history and Mazandaran by Nasir al Din shah Qajar [2].

The project consists of two parts, first to gain this purpose, introduces history and geographical position of Babolsar and Holy Abraham and then studies decorations and inscriptions of Holy Abraham and contents of inscriptions with Quran verses and suras. The building decorations on exterior and interior view, and particularly its exquisite wooden artifacts related to AD ninth and BD fifteenth centuries have given special spiritual grandeur and religious effect to the Imamzadeh that descendants of Imam Musa Kazim.

2. **Geographical and history features of monument**

Holy Abraham is known as Abou Javab among the area people, he and his sister buried in local of Babolsar Bi Bi Sar Rozeh. Holy specular Abraham building build in AD ninth century and is the most important works that by it can recognized city historical value. The monument located in general cemetery on highest part of city and is far a 1 kilometer of Babolsar southeast. The shrine has recorded as national works as 343 number at date of 1321/3/20.

Russian Mlgunef who had come to southern coasts of Caspian Sea more than 150 years ago in AD1237 or BD 1237 and AD 1239 or BD 1860, has written in his itinerary, about shrine: “Shrine and monument located in fenny place that created a big lake when it raining and it can used only of higher lake to go to Imamzadeh and monument. There is not any building in the place and people often go to there to hunt”[3]. Mohammad Hassan Khan Eatemed al saltaneh writes that this place called as Mashhadsar, because happy head of Holy Abraham, Imam Moussa Kazeim (pbuh) buried there, and due to prophet answered to the Imamzadeh from his shrine, "Abou Javab" title given him [4].

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3. **Epistemology of Holy specular Abraham personality**

According to family tree which located in Holy specular Abraham and written by contemporary famous genealogist, Grand Ayatollah Marashi Najafi, the Imamzadeh genealogy backs to Imam Musa Kazim (Pbuh). Mlgunef named the Imamzadeh as Abraham Abou Javad Ebne Imam Musa (pbuh) and writes that Seyed Shamseddin Bablkany has built his monument. It has mentioned Imamzadeh Abraham as Imam Reza' (pbuh) brother in some books. According to existent documents, Mlgunef believes that Imamzadeh Abraham Is son of Imam Musa (pbuh) and verifies being brother of Imam Reza(pbuh)[3].

4. **Decorations and inscriptions of monument**

Imamzadeh Abraham 'monument with simple, high and bulk architecture which is context to bring plaster decorations, tiling, wooden arts, metalwork on exterior and interior view that is aesthetics achievement of art and architecture mix. Exterior view of monument and decorations in interior wall of monument, monument adytum, wooden box, wooden pulpit and wooden doors will studied in this section.

4.1. **Exterior view of monument**

Holy specular Abraham' building is in the form of octagon tower with octagon dome. Its main material is brick, cement and mortar. All body of the building surrounded by later additional buildings. Building main entrance located in north side. There is mosque in east and west sides of building and has been built Hosseinieh in south side. According to history documents old view of Imamzadeh is a high tower monument that has regular octagon pyramid-shaped dome and consists of two old buildings in east and west. Two western and eastern buildings of monument destroyed after the victory of Islamic revolution to repair the building and was built extensive building around monument tower that was different from pervious mode (picture 1). There is a mogharnas ring in exterior view which separates body from dome. There is a high arcades in every side corner that ended to rectangular surfaces and it has worked with mogharnas above them and there are eight gharnise in every side.
4.2. Decorations of monument interior wall section

It have been used from plaster mogharnas, mirrors, tiling, and molding to decorate the building and create spiritual space in monument interior view. Sothudeh writes in his book "from Astara to Astarabad": "there are sirloin elegant in main building and on pier mosque that is unique"[1]. Building interior walls had beautiful and different decorations in the past.in the 70s was destroyed much parts of building interior view molding decorations which had freeze due to humidity its place mirrored in all internal sources from highest part of dome to above plinths.

There is yet some molding and mogharnas of around wall above internal wall of main building that included three mogharnas rows at bottom of dome. This section has been muthanaed (muthana building named as reflective symmetry in calligraphy) in third line located at two sides of molding inscription wall. The present inscription has been muthuana by Quarnic verse "Nasro men Allah va phathon Gharib"in medallion frame (picture 2).

Picture 1: Exterior view of Babolsar Imamzadeh Abraham building (source: writer).

Picture 2: Plaster Mogharnas, molding and plaster muthuana inscription of above internal walls (source: writer).
It has worked not so great and prolific moldings on inscriptions above wall and mosque altar addition to monument. The decorations with deign of lingwort Bouquets, consists of inscriptions with name of fourteen innocents ( pbuh) above walls near to roof, "Allah Akbar", Hamd Surah verses around altar. It has written on inscription above enterance door of monument in this way: Haji Agha Bozorg action.

In history literature has referred to adobe tile which inscribed on death date of a person named as Sadra. The Chinese tile has been written with black lines and very transparent glaze on white clay. Improbably this quatrain refers to death date of Mulla Sadra, famous philosopher of Islam world. Because donkey line equals to 1044 AD and 1634 BD in Jamal account [1], and shows deep roots of shi'it believes in the area.

Sadra who regulated science world
Gained to Sadra, Ferdows rate
Yahiya says at his death date
Paradise rose garden be his position

According to what remained today in internal view of the monument, tile used only in plinths (picture 3). According to being two types of tiles, it can be find that some tiles belong to Qajar dynasty and most of what seen in plinths has been used in next periods most likely due to injured and poured tiles. Different types of one color and seven colors tiles used in the section in form of main text and margin. Central diamond Square has combined in different colors with four lingwort and arabesque combinations among one color tiles with square and octamerous geometric shapes. Margin consists of lingwort flowers on white background.

Picture3: Tiling plinths in interior view (source: writer).
4.3. Tomb shrine

Metal shrine of monuments is combination of several arts such as grid metal, enamel and etching along with drawing on wood. Imamazdeh Abraham monument has an shrine that has been recorded its building date on inscription above the shrine door as 1354(AH). Other information written in the following, such as Isfahan, Hasan Parvaresh' goldsmith, Seyed Ali Khosravani 'etching, Akhavan Khalegh Zadegan' carpentry (picture 4).

Interior and main body sections of shrine is wooden and different metal components installed on exterior view. Wooden box of Imamzadeh Abraham tomb protected into shrine.

![Picture 4: Metal adytum with etching and enamel decorations (source: writer).](image)

4.4. Wooden box

Prolific and great wooden box there is into metal adytum that related to Timurid period. The box decorated by geometric and vegetable drawings and has been carved margins along its sides in with color (picture 5). Religion inscription included Ayat Kursi, blessing be upon the Prophet Muhammad and fourteen infallible Imam, and some Hadith about affection to Muhammad family and Maad. Makers emphasis to usage of Ayat Kursi, blessing be upon the fourteen infallible Imam, and some Hadith about affection to Muhammad family shows Shi'a ' intense desires among box makers.

According to reading inscriptions by Sothudeh, oldest history in shrine is the date of wooden box inscription of Haram at Ramazan of 835 Hejria / 1432 ad [1]. The box built by order of Morteza, son of Seyed Shams din kia and by Phakhr din master and his brother Mohammad Ibn Ali Najjar Amoli known as Razi .there is an old window installed on wall that has been written Nad Ali praise on it from first to end.
4.5. Wooden doors

Drawn doors of the building have prolific woodcarving and girih tiles. Based on books such as Mazandaran itinerary by Nasser din shah Qajar, Rabino book and Sothudeh, there were four drawn wooden doors which everyone had inscription, in the building up to about less than 50 years. Only two doors has remained until now of them [5]. Nasser Din Shah Qajar about Imamzadeh building writes: "this dome building is very old. Four large and small five doors were observed that had great score commercially and of woodcarving" [2].

North door located in entrance door and is opposite of main courtyard. The door length is 238 centimeter ad its width is 82 centimeter. Every valve of door consists of three main parts. In the parts have been carved delicately art and vegetable decorations, lingwort flowers into frame and geometric knot with pentagon, doll, ten feather, and shamse drawings. Two rows margins wood carved around them with prolific art decorations. Other door belongings also covered with many decorations (picture 6).

Artist and industrialist of the valuable door is Ali Ibn Phakhr Din Master, son of Ali Najjar master. Writer of third line in the door is Ahmad Ibn Hussein Siyah Push due to its bottom inscription. North entrance shows 906 Hejria or 1502 ad name of its founder is Seyedeh Nesa Bibi Khatoon Fezzeh, girl of Amir Saed and Amir Shamse Din wife [1]. Amir Shamse Din is one of Marashi family top brasses in Mazandaran who with his brother, Zein al Abedin buried in Imamzadeh Abraham of Sari.
Other monument door is now in eastern entrance and towards Aghayan Mosque which its length is 248 C and width is 89 C. the door also consists of three main parts for decorations. Central part length is more than one and half meter where very elegant vegetable decorations wood carved among geometric knots and there is in horizontal rectangle with length less than 30 C located above and bottom in inscriptions.

According to inscriptions used in two valves of the door, its date is Moharam of 814 Hejria or 1437 ad which built by command of Seyed Aziz Din Shamse Din Babelkani and is a work of Mohamad master, son of Ali Najjar Razi master [6]. The door tools and belongings are noticeable that are small and metal decorations. The most beautiful belongings is brass handle that built as simple head of lion (picture 7). A window with girih tiles wooden decorations and grid in adobe format has located above the door. Inscriptions into third line seen around grids and girih tiles decorations. The long inscription which written in four sides of window contains blessing and hello on Imams, of Imam Hussein to Imam Mahdi (as) and where it referred to Imams 'tombs after every Imam name.

**Picture 6:** General view of north door (source: writer).
5. Quran verses and their themes in monument inscriptions

Irreligious inscriptions are as birth certificate for building. Regarding what passed previously, the building religious inscriptions included to Salavat al Kabir, blessing on fourteen innocents Imams, poems, Azkar. It will offered only to Quran inscriptions such as Ayat Kursi, Hamd sura, Sharifa ayeh of" Nasro min Allah" which have taken directly from Quran.

Written muthanna inscription of verse " Nasro Min Allah va Fathon Gharib" written in internal part of Babolsar Imamzadeh Abraham ( picture 8) great and almighty God in queue sura of Saf , verse 13 says:" Nasro Min Allah va Fathon Gharib" ( give good news to believers that God help and victory is beside.)

Picture 8: Plaster muthanna making of" Nasro Min Allah va Fathon Gharib"(source: writer).
Pervious verses of Saf Sura speak about importance of believe to God and jihad in Allah's way, which is mystery to save from painful punishment. Majid Quran invites humans to believe to God and Jihad. Then says: "great god forgives your sins and locates you in paradise gardens where streams flow under trees, and in clean housings that itself is a great victory, if you do the tradition. Great God acclaims to believers fathon Gharib and near victory beside of great victory. Therefore the statement is God's promise that has been given to all believers up to Prophet Period. But commentators have different comments about what is Fathon Gharib? And it refers usually to Mecca Seizure and Iran and Rome Seizure. Some people consider the matter observes to all seizures obtained in light of believe and Jihad for Allah's way so that it has adapted to Hazrat Mahdi Seizure." Fathom Gharib" has extensive meaning, because in addition to prophet's friends and companions, all humans in all places and periods are audience although prophet's period seizures are applicable. It seems that real intention of God help and acclaim the near victory to believers, is faraj of Ghaem al Mohammad and seizure of all world that will done by his guidance power (7).

Another Quran inscription in the building is Hamd Sura that molded around altar of additional mosque. "In the name of god, Most gracious, most merciful1- praise be to Allah, lord of the universe 2-most gracious, most merciful3-master of the day of judgment 4-we worship you only, we ask you for help only 5- guide us in the right path 6- the path of those whom you blessed, not of those who have deserved wrath, nor of the strayers 7".

The sura called Hamd, because God has been admired in the sura [8]. The suara has many names such as Phatehat al Ketab", " Omm al Ketab", and "Omm AL Quran". The name plurality shows its honor and virtue. The sura consists of two distinct parts, so that the first related to theoretical unity and second part related to functional unity [8].

Theoretical unity: the first 4 verses of the sura (until the lord of universe) contain some believe issues about God and divine names and attributes. God has been admired by attributes of his perfection and surpassed in the sura. "In the name of God" is starting for every things and teaches us to ask help of God for every work. "Praise be to Allah, lord of the universe" is a course about back all blessings and creatures to" God" and paying attention to the fact that all these blessings originate from his clean essence. "Most gracious, most merciful" mentions the point that creation base is his education and Sovereignty based on his mercy and gracious and the principle composes main axis of world education system. "Lord of the universe" is an attention to resurrection and actions reward place and God's dominance on great court.

Functional unity: in second part (from "we worship you only" to end of sura) it has been educated the way of worship, pray, help, and how find and travel the direct route and arrive to eternal happiness. "We worship you only, we ask you for help only" states unity in praise and unity in humans' mainstay. "Guide us in the right path" shows servants' need and love to guidance and notices to the fact that all our guidance is from him. Finally last verse of sura" the path of those whom you blessed, not of those who have deserved wrath, nor of the strayers 7" is clear and light drawing of" right path" "path of those included his blessings and the path is separated from strayers"[7].
Hamd has been known as paramount and noblest Sura. Because God equals it to great Quran in verse of 87 in Hejr sura, and the other is that the sura must be read in prayer and other suras cannot be replaced [9].

Regarding to Fakhr Razi' idea, three issues of God's praise, being busy to his service and obedience and ask to guidance are results of all books that all the things included in Hamd sura. Three the first verses are divine praise. The statement of "We worship you only" refers to trying in slavery' way, and "we ask you for help only" statement shows admission to frustration and humiliation and returning to God, and last verse is ask to guidance [10]. Bounded person must learn and read Hamd sura correctly in the first and second units of obligatory and recommended prayers [11].

"Allah is he besides whom there is no god 1- the ever living, the self-subsisting by whom all subsist slumber 2- does not overtake him nor sleep 3- whatever is in heavens and whatever is in the earth is his 4- who is he that can intercede with him but by his permission5- he knows what is before them and what is behind them6- and they cannot comprehend anything out of his knowledge except what he pleases his knowledge 7- extends over the heavens and the earth 8- and the preservation of them both tries him not 9- and he is the most high and the great[2: 255].

There is no god except unique god who relies on itself and creatures relay on him. Deep and light sleep never come to him and he does not neglect from world management even for a second. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth is his. Who is that intercede except to his command? Therefore intercessors' intercession for those who are worthy to being interceded, doesn't reduce his absolute dominance, he knows what is before them (servants) and what is behind them( and
past and future are same for his science) and nobody knows his science except the extent he wants(he is who knows everything and limit science and knowledge of others is a ray of his infinite and unlimited science. His throne embraces the heavens and the earth and maintenance of the two doesn't fatigue him, and high, dignity and greatness is only for him. Prophet (PBUH) named the verse as "Ayat al Kursi" due to existence of the "Kursi" word in the verse. Calling on the name was famous since Islam launched and had been read on prophet tongue. The "Ayat Al Kursi" has been interpreted as greatest verse and head of Quran in Narrations [12].

![Picture 10: The part of tomb box inscription, third line, wood carving, and the beginning of "Ayat al Kursi" (source: writer).](image)

"Ayat al Kursi" is known as Quran slogan and message due to existence of precise and fine education in the verse that is pure unity which shown by "Allah is he besides whom there is no god" statement therefore god name repeated 16 times and represented his attributes. "Ayat Al Kursi" comprehensiveness to God relation with his creatures special with human caused to excellence of it on others and persuaded commentators to explain it by special attention or write about this independent writings. A correct narration that considers the verse included greatest name of god which god be read with it, every praise accepted. Prophet quotes about virtue and status of the verse that the verse is paramount and most important of Quran verses [13].
It quoted by prophet that everyone who reads "Ayat Al Kursi" 100 times is as a person has praised god for all his life [14]. Its reading equals with quarter of Quran. Imam Sadegh quotes that "Ayat al Kursi" is high peak of Quran. It has been quoted by prophet about effects and blessings of the verse that its reading protects the person and his children and home from some vermin and its reading after obligatory prayer put reader in god obligation until another prayer reading and its reading at sleeping put the person under protection of two angels, anything nothing can prevent from his enter to paradise except death. And god itself will bills his spirit and the person is like as who has been killed with along to prophet. If the verse read in any house devil and Jinns get away from there. "Ayat al Kursi" included 50 words and any word has 50 blessing. When Hazrat Fatimah was bearing, prophet said: it read the verse and Sokhreh verse (Araf, 54) and Mouzatin on Hazrat. Any one reads it with three first verses of Momen Sura at morning will be protected until night and if read at night protected until morning. And any one reads it with two first verses of Baghareh Sura, god helps him [13]. It also recommended to reading of two verses after "Ayat Al Kursi" in narration that quoted by Imam Ali Ibn al Hussein from prophet and in narration by Ibn Masood. Prophet based the narration said: everyone reads four the first verses of Baghareh and two verses after them, he will not have any problem in his life and property, and no devil closes to him and doesn't forget Quran [15]. Apparently this Hadith caused to "Ayat al Kursi" considered as a title for all three verses among Shias. The two verses have deep link with human spirit education and have amazing effect on it, and states that there is no mandatory of god to adopt the religion. Because it recognized the development and guidance way from the misdirection. "There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness is now distinct from error". And everyone who disbelieves in the idol and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest tie that will never break, Allah is hearing and knowing: "faman yakfor btaghoot va yoamen bellah faghades tamsaka bel orvate vosgha lanfesama laha va allaho samio alim". Allah is the guardian of those who believe he brings them out from darkness into light:"Allaho valiyol lazina amanou yokhrejohom mena zolomat ela noor". As for those who disbelieve, their guides are idols, they bring them out from the light into darkness, and they are the companions of the fire and shall live in it for ever:" val lazina kafaroo avliaohom al taghoot yokhrejounahom mena noor ela zolomat oulaeka ashabo al nareh hom fiha khaledoun".

6. Conclusion

Art and architecture are visual appearance of deep spiritual concepts in form, color, and volume in religion places. Art works appeared in religious leader shrines, has effected significantly on strengthening of religious beliefs and desires among the area people. Imamzade shrines that buried in villages and cities of Mazandaran are such buildings. Imamzadeh Abraham of Babolsar known as "Abou Javab" had been noticed by area people, diplomats, religious even tourists and western orientalists. Many of history books has mentioned the religion place even valuable art works. Moreover architecture features such as octagonal building and high two- capped dome,
the shrine is important due to wooden box and two wood carved doors of frame type, knot and inscription decorated with vegetable decorations, lingwort flower and leaves and arabesque flowers. According to what passed, the building has had two wood carved doors, history inscriptions and valuable decorations in the past. Great effect of environmental damages, incorrect repair of building or theft by the works profiteers have been destroyed or disappeared during the time.

Box and the Imamazdeh' doors inscriptions contain Salavat Kabir, Ayatol Kursi, Hadith, name of founders and building builder and valuable artistic works. What makes alive spiritual experience and calm of religious space originates from decorations that covered all internal part of building. All of doors, propositions, and walls have covered with drawing, different colors and traditional material of Iran until end. Written verses in the building included " Nasro men allah va fathom gharib", "Ayat al Kursi" and Hamd Sura. The verses and Suras with high spiritual concepts, mention religious and Islamic principles and call pilgrims to thought and meditation about creation and guiding of almighty god.

References