

**Investigation of the ornamentals/decorations of religious constructions located  
in Semnan province  
(Semnan Jame Mosque and Bayazid Bastam Mosque)**

Mina NOUHIFARD

Graduate, Field of art, Yazd branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran

**Abstract:**

Religious buildings of Semnan province in various areas have come to exist and eye-catching ornaments have been added. Such aforementioned religious premises have special value within Islamic architecture. It is noteworthy that such ornaments enjoy unity in ascetic sense, greatness and magnificence. The decorative and ornaments of religious building in Semnan province are amongst Iranian valuable treasures such as invaluable cultural heritage and identity has been handed down from one generation to another and on such glorification path they have been affected by elements such as human labor, people beliefs, administrations and constructive materials. Semnan Jame mosque and Bayazid Bastam mosque have been decorated by enjoying Razi and Azari style of architecture. Semnan Jame mosque and Bayazid mosque are considered as buildings which have gone under some changes within various historical periods. These alterations have been effective on the type of applied ornaments. In this study the influential religious and environmental factors in a variety of religious buildings and the applicable decorative of Semnan province have been taken into great consideration. The main objective behind this research is to investigate and decode the ornamental patterns on the basis of taken images and the existing documents from religious premises situated in Semnan province. This research is an experimental/field study and the sampling approaches applied on purpose and they have been used in a few constructions with tvrshdar approach.

**Keywords:** Historical buildings, Semnan Province, Ornamentals, Plaster brickwork.

**1. Introduction**

Within different subdivisions of Iranian art the art of decorating building enjoys a unique value and credibility and it has been a typical applicable art in the realm of architecture dating back to those very old periods. Ornamental patterns and their usage in different constructions are considered as an integral part of Iranian art particularly when it comes to the Islamic period. It is worth mentioning such ornaments / decorations have been emerged in Islamic arts in various forms, such as curved motifs, arabesques, geometrical and plant patterns. Among the mentioned styles, Chinese knot inscriptions and motifs of Islamic art decorations are the most basic alphabet and building blocks of Islamic art. When architectural decorations are compared with artistic values they will be evaluated on the basis of architectural reflecting the peoples' beliefs and religions as an adage to the sense of beauty and aesthetic perceptions which can best be manifested through various materials and facilities of different ages such as plaster, brickwork, tiling, painting, sculpture and mirror work. All the mentioned approaches have an important role in boosting the overall construction. In addition, agreeableness and beauty, have played an

important role in strengthening the construction. Meanwhile such mentioned approaches have been parallel to the technical and scientific principals and they have been applied to noble construction with special qualities. Undoubtedly Islamic arts has been conceived in its most complete form in the applied decorations and such ornaments in particular within the mosques and religious sites of Iran have been developed by using various materials and skillful Muslim artists specialized in decorating religious premises. Accordingly, it should be pointed out that the decorations of religious buildings unique to Semnan province are among the most valuable outstanding artistic performance of Iranian territory. The important artistic innovations applied in Semnan religious premises could be an accessible source for those artists longing to gain more insights with respect to the constituent values. This is mostly because of the projected art in this Iranian region encompassing arts of inscription and utilizing a variety of plant motifs, geometric, Mogharnas, etc., thereby, very different and beautiful decorative designs had been created catching the eyes of its viewers due to the meticulous skill of their originators. Choosing such a topic for this research is very important in a sense that the resources and carried out studies associated with ornaments of Semnan religious buildings are scarce. Besides, most of the ornaments of such religious premises have been damaged by passing time and the rest at risk of destruction. This is an unfortunate happening because there is no comprehensive knowledge of such sites. In this research, out of eighteen most iconic religious buildings of Semnan province two religious buildings namely: Semnan and Bayazid Bastam mosque have been selected and investigated. These buildings are in different geographical and climatic situation and they also differ in decorative arrays. The main objective of this research is to review and reread decorative motifs of Semnan Jame and Bayazid Bastam mosques. The main research question of this study deals with the point that whether the decorations pertaining to Semnan Jame and Bayazid Bastam Mosques have been affected by the socio-religious historical and geographical limitation or not?

Semnan province has got a standing history and antiquity for that reason it had witnessed plenty of wars, failures and victories. Semnan province was called the state Ghomes before the new divisions at national level.

Bartulet believes that Ghumes state is the same territory used to be called Ghumsiye by Ayzdvr Kharksy. Border limits of Ghumes are Semnan, Damghan and Shahroud cities. Interestingly enough Semnan was considered as a part of Kumesh/Ghumes historical land subsequent to Islamic periods and the geographical name of Ghumes was the typical term in use within Ghajar dynasty. The existing books on Semnan province associate more with the history of this province and the brief introduction of historical monuments and land marks of this area. The history book of Semnan written by Abdolrafie Haghghat, Semnan historical sites written by Mohamadali Mokhlesi, books relevant to Islamic architecture, an Iranian architecture including Islamic architecture book written by Papa Dopolo, Islamic architecture written by Olge Graber, Markus Hotstine are some of the available books on Islamic architecture of Semnan. However there is no carried out research relevant to the ornaments/decorations relevant to Semnan religious building and this has always been the gap among all the research issues and carried out studies. But in this research efforts have been made to specifically investigate and study the decorations applied in

religious building of Semnan province. It is to be noted that in the current study the experimental/field research methods has been applied.

Semnan province with a vast area of 95,815 square meter includes states such as Semnan, Damghan, Shahrud and Garmsar. In the past Semnan was called Kumesh (Ghumes in Islamic geographical texts) one of Iranian famous regions which was very important and its name has repeatedly been appeared in geographical and historical books(13:1352,Haghighat). Kumesh (Ghumes) state involving Semnan, Damghan, Shahroud and Bastam Haliyeh cities hasve always been connective point between east, west and north-east of Iran in various historical periods and this geopolitical position of Semnan was due to its geographical and natural situation. Basically Iranian central desert was located in southern part of Semnan and it is a venue which cannot be crossed and from the northern part it has been extended to Alborz Mountain. For this reason, this long and narrow territory was called silk historical road. There are three etymological studies for its name: 1) Kumesh which was initially Kumeshah term (Chekumeh as a lexicon means a shelter made of wood or reed and farmers use these wooden structures to protect their agricultural activities) and hunters were watching their prays closely from those shelters. 2) Kumesh was initially referred to Mes mountain (Mes is Persian equivalent for copper and since Semnan mountains were full of copper mines the mountain was called Mes (meaning copper)). 3) this state did not have any running rivers as permanent water streams the people of this region for the first time in history have attempted to create aqueduct and canal to abstract water and this was the main reason Semnan was called Kumesh which means well digger in Persian terminology and people living there are referred as Kumeshi.

## **2. Decorations in Islamic architecture**

The ornaments/decortions of religious construction in Semnan province have been formed during different historical periods. Since the advent of Islam religion in Iran the construction of religious buildings of Semnan was commenced and each historical period had witnessed various ornamental elements used in decorating religious buildings. Decoration and using ornaments have always had a unique role in Islamic architecture. Such decoration in mosque and religious venues of Semnan province demonstrated great aesthetic magnificence and outstanding unity. It is notable that Wisdom, unity, and harmony of the decoration of religious buildings is very important. (59:1381,Ansari). Decorate in Persian language means to beautify something. As Islam religion puts a high value on sanitation and cleanliness thereby using ornaments to decorate mosques and paying a great deal of attention to the magnificence and beauty of such religious places has always been considered one of the innate tendencies of human being characterizing the lord almighty's attributes. This innate tendency of a Muslim person has let him to decorate the mosques as a biting heart the Islamic cities where the souls and hearts of the Muslim communities are attached and they are the venues accommodating through believers. This decoration of the mosques assimilates the pure soul of true Muslims. Each of the applied colors and each of the ornamentals patterns in mosques create such a situation that Muslim prayers gain their spiritual peace, concentration, and religious state. As mentioned in Islamic statements made by Imams: using geometrical, arabesques, and

The use of geometric patterns, arabesques, and Imam Hussein as a form of architectural and decorative elements and refraining from drawing human and creature images in religious sites in particular the mosques has always been considered as the principal and most fundamental Islamic arts encompassing the most basic principles of Islamic art, abstract, denying the icon-oriented, rhythmic repetitions, and complete backfilling has led to avoidance of portraying faces and developing more of geometrical and the single plant designs(46,45:1391,Ghaemi).

In Islamic art paintings were removed from their own individual shape and connect it to other images in "continuous and rhythmic repetition" and under the rule of "geometric and mathematical disorder such" network dependent and seamlessly created. There exists Arabic script which was the language of divine cultivation and it was projected as an ornamental element. This was the starting point to create inscription to new format and a type of decorations unique to Islamic art in the realm architecture. Arabic orthography has a high decorative potential due to its alphabet shape and it becomes even more complicated and secretive in combination with geometrical and plant patterns (48, Hama).

In general, Muslim artist is not after visualization or the materialistic word. It was the case that Muslim artists have always been attracted to single patterns. The artist observes the nature's principles and the basics of creating the portrait and then he creates a new pattern which is an indication of the creature design inside the artist's soul. Other task of the artist is that when there is nothing to be portrait he uses descriptions to portrait something which is not objectively existent in the world. Therefore the viewer of the artistic work will see himself as a partner of what he perceives. This is the reason why he enjoys each and every time he looks at a artistic work as if he observes his performance indeed this is the mirror reflecting his own face and a window shaping his consideration in a different format.(2:1381,Khazaei)

## **2.1. Semnan Jame Mosque**

This mosque was established on Sasanian fireplace within initial centuries of lunar calendar. The works and monuments of this fireplace have been identified through guess-culation and excavations of the fourth decade according to the lunar calendar. This construction has changed during different historical periods and some parts have been added accordingly. In the recent renovated building they are some influences observable from Timurid and Mongolian period.(90:1370,Haghighat). For the time being, the single Jame mosque of Semnan located in city center to the east north of Imam Khomeini street adjacent to Sheikhaladole Bazar. Interestingly enough there are other centers such as Hazrat Hama and Pahne tent around this mosque. It is to be pointed that from the local position in which Jame mosque has been constructed, the importance of such a landmark could be realized. Since Semnan Jame mosque has been situated in city center and approximately all the local roots of Semnan province end to this mosque. There are two ways of accession to Jame mosque one through the main street (Iman Khameini) and the other by the gate door located on the eastern site(Jelokhan) which takes you to the building yard through passing from a gate with tile works on surrounding walls.(Cultural heritage of Semnan Province) ( Figure No.1).



**Figure 1:** Mosque in Semnan (Picture taken by the author)

The recent components of Jame mosque include: Maghsure porch, Shabestan and the yard. The position of this mosque is similar to Sunni mosque (90:1370,Haghighat). It has a very tall Menara and on stone plates put up on the walls you can see the date of its dedication. The history behind the construction of this unique mosque dates back to 1113(Cultural Heritage of Semnan Province). There are several stones inscription in the balcony out of which two inscriptions are more significant at which two commandments of Safavid king could be seen. These two commandments were used to inform majority of the people present at the porch.

## **2.2. The Main Building of the Mosque**

The mosque is enclosed in rectangular shape whose Northern West Shabestan was established in Sanjar Sultan period and by Aboosaeid Semnani and Khaje Nezamedin. Northern east Shabestan was built by Keyghobadebnremalek, Sharafoldin Semnani and Amirteymur Gurkani (the minister of that period). This Shabestan is connected to Hazrat Bazar through a well decorated entry way which is very beautiful. On the corner of northern east of the mosque Shabestan of Saljughy Menara has been located. The southern east Shabestan contains sixteen circular pillars in the middle and eight pillars on the eastern wall forming twenty seven arc facades/ceilings of the mentioned Shabestan. This Shabestan was built by Sheikh Roknoldin Alaodole the minister of Mungolian Arghonhan and with the corporation of Zolfagahr khan Semnani the ruler of Semnan, Damghan, Shahrud and Bastam during the kingdom of Kujar Fathalishah, it was renovated (Haman). The brick porch is very high and its height exceeds twenty one meter on the western part of the mosque yard. This part was added by the minister of king Shahrokh Teymuri,Khaje Shamsodin Ali Balicheh Semnani, during that period. The mosque Menara dates back to the fifth century (according to lunar calendar) of the basis of its inscription. The present Menare includes two altars with two made in Safavid style. This Menare has been located on the northern east corner of the mosque without using any platform and it was built by Khaje Aboosaeed Semanani and Khaje Nezamodin Bakhtiar Semnani during the kingdom of Sultan Sanjar Saljughy concurring the construction of the mentioned Shabestan. The height of this Menare ranges from 28.5 to 31.20 and it has 91 stairs(Haman).

## **2.3. Brick Decorations**

In the main building of Semnan Jame mosque brick ornaments have been used as the most important and eye catching brick decorations in the Menara. In other parts of this building brick ornaments have been repeatedly used. Ornaments on this Menara include six sections and two inscriptions. All these sections have been separated from each other via a decorative stripe (Figure No.2). From the roof up to the lower part of the first inscription the ornaments of Menara are in the shape of slant muddy square shapes. This pattern has been repeated in the



**Figure 2:** Menara Semnan Mosque (Picture taken by the author)

second and third section of the Menara located on top of the lower inscription. In fact the slant square flower have been carved in three sections of this Menare (1373, MaherolNaghsh). In the fourth section there is Chelipa staircase (Haman) and the ornaments of section five of this Menara is an square shape sun or for cross in symmetrical order(Haman). The six section is symmetrical square shape as depicted in Figure No.2 of the Menare for Semnan Jame mosque.(1361,Haman) Because of little space in this section the pattern has been drawn in horizontal format. On top of section six ornaments and under Moghrans altar Menare has been located which is in the form of protruding Maghrans and the ornamental material used are bricks and special tiles. Special tiles are among turquoise ornaments which has been used in renovating the Menare during Safavi period. Brick Moghranses with small patterns behind and small square shape wholes inside the Moghrans have been depicted in (Figure No.3). The Menare of Semnan Jame mosque has to important description in Kufi orthography. One of the mentioned descriptions include holly Quran versus and the other poses the name of the funder. The upper inscription contain a text with the following content(«بسم الله امر به بناء هذه المناره الامير الجليل السيدا (ابو حرب بختيار بن محمد مولى امير المؤمنين.»). It seems that these inscriptions have been made without any prior plan or any patterns to be copied (Cultural Heritage of Semnan Province).



**Figure 3:** Decorations of Jame mosque in Semnan (Picture taken by the author)

### **North Eastern Entrance and Eastern Shabestan**

Inside the entrance there exists a hexagon space which is called Hashti in Persian terminology connected to the mosque yard through the corridor. The ceiling and the wall of Hashti and the corridor are made of bricks. On the corridor's wall an arc shape decorative similar to a frame has been carved on the ceiling using Meghrans which is of primary types. For the time being, a few number of these Meghran shapes are available in the Iranian construction (Figure No.4). The bricks used on this ceiling on the Meghrans are from proclaim bricks located on the sides of Hashti.

On the outer space of this entrance, on the central part of the ceiling colorful bricks in the shape of slant square (Soli) and mud have been used on the pillar of the ceiling with designs of symmetrical shape. The pattern of the applied bricks contain sun design and flower shapes on the upper side of the western corridor connected to this entrance in a colorful design (1373, Maher-Ol-Naghsh).

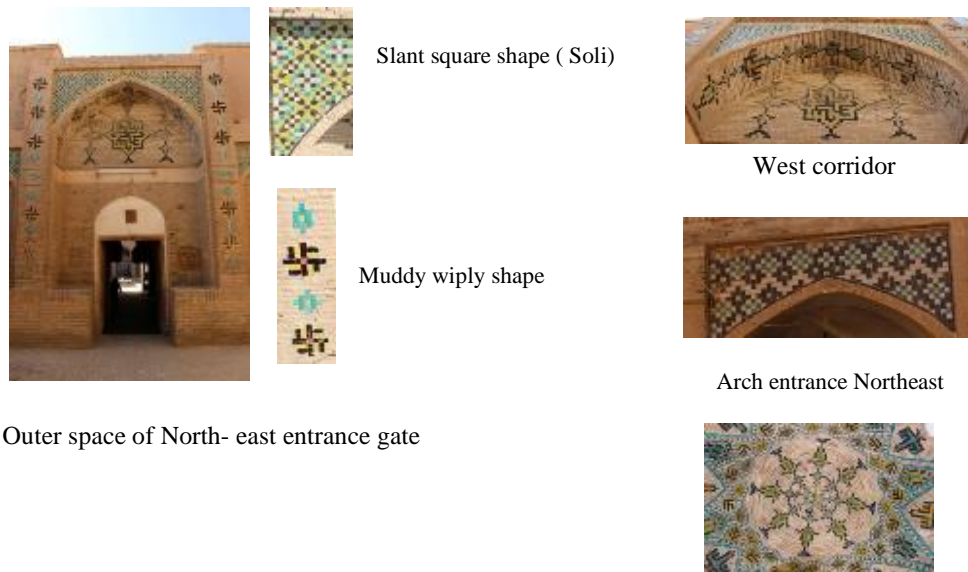


**Figure 4:** Wall entrance arch northeast (Picture taken by the author)

On the entrance gate door inside the ceiling and inside the ceiling they have been colorful bricks decorated with Koofi orthography with holy names of (Allah) and (Ali) and it is to be noted (Ali) has been used inside the sun pattern and (Allah) under the ceiling along with patterns similar to vase.

Inside the entrance, Colorful bricks have been used on the ceiling of Hashti and Koofi Banaei orthography could be seen under the holy names of (Ali),(Mohamad) and geometrical patterns such as square and circle and the pattern assimilating was have been used accordingly All these motifs and shapes in the form of an eight-pointed star in the middle of a hejdahzelei is closed.. Colorful bricks in the color of white, yellow, red and black(Figure No.5) it seems that brick ornaments of this section have been used during Kojar dynasty concurring the construction of Masjed-ol-Nabli located near Jame mosque.

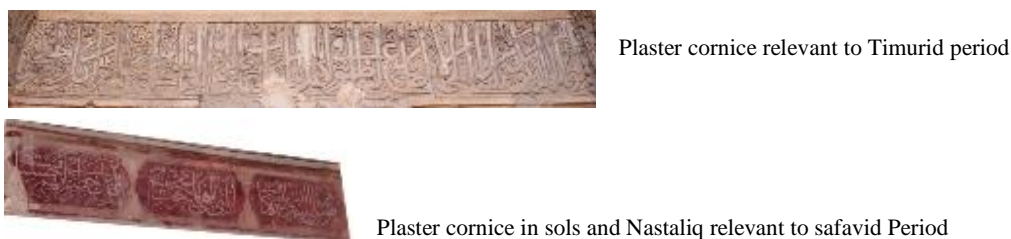




**Figure 5:** North eastern entrance gate (Picture taken by the author)

## 2.4. Plaster Ornaments

The only plaster ornaments of Semnan Jame mosque can be observed on the balcony. In addition to this, one of the plaster inscription of this balcony will probably date back Teymuri period(Haman) which has been located on the upper space on the window in the middle of the balcony. The mentioned description contains writing in sols orthography and its background has been decorated with landscape patterns. On the background of this plaster work the blue color was used which faded through passing time. Other plaster inscriptions relates to Safavi period situated under Teymuri inscription(Haman) and it was written in sols and Nastaligh on red background and in the form of rectangular frames (Figure No.6).



**Figure 6:** Plaster cornice of the porch in Semnan Jame Mosque (picture tken by the author)

## 2.5. Tiling Ornaments

There are a few tile ornaments existing in Semnan Jame mosque which can be observed on the balcony. There exist the tiled inscription dating back to Teymuri period installed on the upper



section of internal space within the balcony and it was written in Sols orthography with white color and blue background along with landscape patterns and branches of a tree with leaves making a circular and connected movement. This pattern are in yellowish color.(Figure No.7)



**Figure 7:** Tile work inscription in white Sol's script (picture taken by the author)

## 2.6. Wooden Ornaments

The only wooden ornaments capturing the attention of the viewers is located on the western gate door. The gate door is divided in two parts with shallow carvings decorated with landscape, slim and trees pattern along with branches and leaves in the middle on the surrounding area and it between the inscriptions were written in Sols orthography.

All the patterns are symmetrical and repeated on the two sides of the door. This door relates to Safavid period.(Figure No.8) In the ornaments of Semnan Jame mosque Razi style was followed which is a dominant style began in the fourth century of the Lunar calendar and it was used by the time that Mongulians invaded the country. Different names such as (Albuyeh), (Alziyar), (Sajughi), (Atabaki),and (Kharazmshahi) were used to name the mentioned period. Changes were made in different historical era due to the influence of various kingdoms which is reflected in this mosque and the ornaments of the mosque were changed accordingly thereby the changes of ornaments and decorations were made under the direct influence of those historical periods.



**Figure 8:** Western two sided wooden door ( picture taken by the author)

## 2.7. Bayazid Mosque and Bastam Historical Complex

Bayazid mosque is one of the oldest monuments within Bastam historical side and the mosque is ideally situated on the most southern part of the complex. Bastam historical site is located near Mosadegh Bastam square and comprised of eleven buildings; Bayazid mosque as one of these buildings exists within this historical complex and it has attracted a great deal of attention. (Cultural Heritage of Semnan Province) Bastam historical site includes first Bayazid mosque, second Byazid mosque and Ilkhani mosque. Before entering the mosque, we need to step in

space which is called Ravagh referred as the yard of the mosque before Safavid historical period. It was this period that the mosque was renovated and the roof has been constructed on the main building of the mosque covering the entry route.(31:1388,Dezyanian)

## **2.8. The Main Building of the Mosque**

Bayazid mosque at its current situation is composed of two separate sections in vertical positions. Section1: which is indeed the second Bayazid mosque and possesses east-west direction and dedicated to the male section of the mosque. The initial building belongs to Saljughhi historical period and it was built at the time of constructing the Menare(514). Mehrab is in the second mosque and the plaster works was done in 699 of the lunar calendar and the height of the mentioned Menare is 3.9 meter and the weight equals to 3.3 meter. The builder of this Menare was Mohamad-ebne-alhosain-ben abitaleb almohandes bana damghani. Despite other Islamic mosques whose Mehrab is situated in middle of the area facing to Ghebleh the Mehrab of this mosque has been located at the eastern half of the wall facing Ghebleh. It was Raziyyedin Mohamad Eisa, the eight successor of Bayazid who built this construction. This mosque has got an entrance door with three sides and it is consider as a main gate door of the mosque situated on Mehrab axis in order to protect the valuable wooden door and as the consequence of such design the eastern ceiling close to this wooden door was destructed and it has been opened as temporary gate door. Second part which is in a vertical position to this section and considered as ladies section is a building whose cultural heritage has been named after Ilkhani mosque. This building was decorated by Damghani architects the creator of famous inscription located in Bayazid mosque and the ladies section on the eastern side share the same area with Bayazid mosque. On the eastward of Bastam Bayazid mosque and connected to it, there is a Menare built in the year of 514 lunar calendar on the basis of brick Kufi inscription. The height of the mentioned Menare was 25(?zar?) according to Ganje Danesh and Merat-ol-Baladan book. Nowadays, the height of this Menare is equal to 14 meter. Therefore it is widely believe that the height of Menare was calculated from the ground level for it was mentioned 25(zar) in those old books(60:1379,Hatam). The entrance to Menare has been blocked since the year of 1361 following the return order issued by the archeological general office for Islamic guidance ministry. The reason behind blocking this route was due to observing a fault in Menare and the risk of its destruction in case visitors go up the stairs. Various ornaments including brick works, beautiful pattern of the Menara and there proportion with varying sections demonstrate unique artistic sense of Saljughhi artist to have created such master piece brick work in those old time. This beautiful Menara has a wonderful dome similar to spade and half-spade. The staircase around Menare is in the form of a labyrinth with wholes on the body of Menara to supply the needed inner light of this construction (39:1388,Dezyanian).

## **2.9. Brick Ornaments of Menara**

Brick decorations of Menara encompasses five different sections along with two inscriptions written in Kufic script/orthography. All these sections have been separated from one another with a decorating stripe. (Figure No.9)

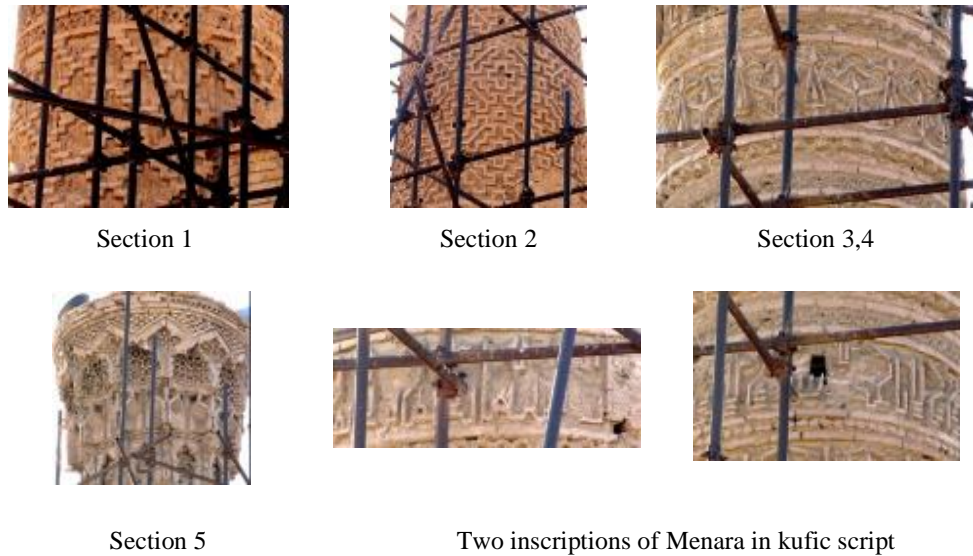
The first section of these ornaments located a bit lower than a roof level. This section extended under the first inscription possessing chain flowers which decorated with an ornamental chain

muddy shape from the next section which is the inscription by itself(1372,Maherolnaghsh) Second part deals with square shape ornaments in four symmetrical portions with sun patterns separated by ornamental stripe in the form of a chain from the next section which is the inscriptions(Haman).Section three of ornaments are brick works with plant patterns whose main part was ruined. Part four a similar to part three and again this section has been decorated with brick works.Section five including Moghranses above the Menara include some plain sections and other brick works along with muddy patterning.



**Figure 9:** Mnarh Bayazid Bastami Mosque (picture taken by the author)

On the highest part of this Menara there are five rows of bricks. Two inscriptions of this Menara written in Kufic script/ orthography out of which, one possess Ayat-ol-Korsi and the other is not legible (Cultural Heritage of Semnan Province)(Figure No.10).



**Figure 10:** Decorations of bayazid Mosque (picture taken by the author)

### **2.10. Southern Wall of the Mosque**

The outside landscape/view behind southern wall of Bayazid mosque (male mosque) there are four brick walls with very beautiful brick ornaments. The ornaments include new flower pattern, dormant brick work and plaster patterns along with flowers pattern on brick.(1381,MaherolNaghsh)(Figure No.11).

### **2.11. Entrance Balcony**

The entrance balcony of the mosque was converted to the arcade within Safavid period including four brick facade. One of these ceilings was the older gate door with a wooden door comprised of three sides. Above the wooden door there is brick work written in Kufic orthography in which the sentence («لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله») is perceivable (Figure No.12).



**Figure11:** Outer space of southern wall (picture taken by the author)



**Figure 12:** Behind Bayazid mosque Kufic script on top of three sided door (picture taken by the author)

### **3. Plaster Ornaments**

#### **3.1. Sanctuary**

Mehrab/Sanctuary is in dark gray color and there are three inscriptions with plaster work written in Sols orthography and another plaster inscription in Kufi orthography. The first inscription written in Sols orthography surrounded the area around Mehrab and the written content of holy verses of Quran (Verse 18 & 19 of Tuba Sure) (1370, Haghghat). The second inscription in Sols is located on the arc of Mehran and includes the background with landscape and slim patterned content in Arabic language which says «سنله عين سلطان العارفين قدس الله نفسه بم نلت قال بار خال (سرور في القلب المؤمن عمل محمد حسين بن ابي طالب، المهندس بناء الدامغان غفر الله و لوالديه و المؤمنين و المؤمنات) (Haman). The third inscription in Sols is situated inside the half dome of Mehrab/Sanctuary under the arc beside very beautiful slim and landscape patterns. This inscription is in the form of a plaster wavy stripe and the content is Ayat-ol-Korsi surah of Quran (1388, Dezyanian). The fourth inscription written in Kufi orthography with slim and landscape patterns in plaster on the Mehrab inner wall. Beneath the inner wall of Mehrab there are geometrical patterns in the form of a hexagon with four symmetrical sections including landscape patterns. On the half pillars of Mehrab landscape patterns hexagone pattern (1393, Moghbeli), and above these half pillars there are some inscriptions written in Sols orthography and the phrase «لا اله الا الله» has been inscribed. Two sides of Mehrab along with two plaster margins as ornaments whose first margin are slim and landscape patterns and the second margin is flower patterning. In plaster works of the upper part of Mehrab/sanctuary which is situated in a rectangular frame with arabesques and plant patterns in a grid format have created plaster work in Mehrab existing shapes (Figure No.13).



first inscription in sols script



Forms Mehrab



Second inscription in sols script



plaster works on the two sides of sanctuary



Third inscription in sols script within  
half dome shape of the sanctuary



The fourth inscription in Kufic

**Figure 13:** Mehrab of the mouse (picture taken by the author)



### 3.2. Wooden Ornaments

In Bayazid second mosque (male mosque) there is a very delicate wooden door with three sides and it has beautiful geometrical patterns such as decagon star pattern in the middle of the wooden door and frames decorated by plant patterns along with frames containing Kufic inscriptions possessing decorated margins (Figure No.14)

Azari and Razi styles have been followed in ornamental work of Bayazid mosque. Azari style is the evolution of Razi style which was dominant after Mongolian invasion and it was in used by the tense century of the lunar calendar. Bayazid mosque like Semnan Jame mosque was experiencing some changes in different historical periods and the mentioned changes were influential on the type of used ornaments.



**Figure 14:** Wooden carving on three sided door (picture taken by the author)

**Table 1:** The Chart of Comparative Analysis for the Applied Ornaments of Bayazid and Semnan Jame Mosque

Ornaments	Semnan Jame Mosque	Bayazid Mosque
Brick Ornaments	Brick Menare, Brick Ornaments in Six Sections, Two Inscriptions written in Koofi Orthography	Menare, Brick Ornaments in Five Sections, Two Inscriptions in Koofi Orthography
	North-East Entrance and Eastern Shabestan, Color Brick Decorated with Slant Soli Square , Flower Pattern, Four Sided Symmetrical Square, Koofi Banaei Orthography with colorful Bricks	Entrance Balcony, Koofi Inscription
		The Southern Wall of Bayazid Mosque, Flower Patterning, Dormant Brick Work, with Plaster Patterns, Flower patterns Made of Incurving on Brick Works
Plaster Ornaments	Balcony, Two Inscriptions in Sols Orthography with Landscape Patterns	Mehrab, Three Plaster Works Inscriptions Written In Sols Orthography and one plaster Inscriptions In Koofi Orthography, Landscape and Geometrical Patterns
Wooden Ornaments	Two Sided Wooden Door, Landscape Patterns and descriptions Written in Sols and Orthography	Three Sided Wooden Door, Geometrical and Landscape Patterns, Inscriptions Written in Koofi Orthography
Tiling Ornaments	Balcony Including Tile Worked Inscription On the door Written in White Color Sols Orthography with Landscape Patterns	None



## **Result**

Inscriptional patterns are considered as the treasure for each and every nation reflecting what human being have accomplished in forms of desires, analysis and reflections during his life span. This is an invaluable heritage and the cultural identity handed down from one generation to another and have been affected by elements such as human force and peoples' religious beliefs, materials and on its path they have been revolutionized. In Semnan province like other states and provinces of Iranian territory, the traditional customs, formalities and literature of the folks have been very influential on the decoration of religious constructions. The architects of the religious building, with access to specific architectural styles, their efforts have been spent decorating the buildings. Variations in the way of treatment procedures decorations decorative elements characteristic of the architecture of the two buildings is outstanding. They have beautified buildings, via the brickwork, plaster, and wood trim. But two dominant factors of decorations are plaster and brickwork which have been used more frequently in the two mentioned mosques. The two mosques have been located in two various climatic situations. This could be one of the principal reasons behind different decorations. Semnan Mosque located in the desert and due to its geographical location and warm and dry climatic brick work has been the dominant decorations used. On the contrary Bayazid mosque has been located in a mountainous area with cold climatic situation. Therefore, there has been more plaster work than Semnan Jame Mosque. In Bayazid Mosque the inscriptions are more delicate and inscriptions are of high significance, thereby, they have been applied in the sanctuary of the mosque. Decorating of the two mentioned mosques are on the basis of the two Azari and Razi decoration styles. The use of signs which were very important for the people living before Islamic period in a hidden manner conveying an important message and was considered as a holy sign in these old days. Broken Chelipa is one of those sacred signs mentioned. It seems that the Iranian Muslim artist have made conscious effort to continue his national art while following religious principles, as a result of this he could have created Iranian Islamic art which is a consolidated version of the two styles The decorations used in religious constructions of Semnan province is heavily based on the perceptions and beliefs of the people of that era and the limitations such as socio-religious and geographical or historical issues have been effective on shaping the traditional virtues, literature of the folk and decorations used in religious buildings.

## **References**

- [1] The Truth (RAFI), Abdolrafi, (1352), History of Semnan, Second Edition, published by the Governor of Semnan, Semnan
- [2] The Truth (RAFI), Abdolrafi, (1370), on Ghomes, Third Edition, published by koomesh, Tehran
- [3] Khaza'i, M., (1381), thousands of printing, publishing Islamic Art Institute, Tehran
- [4] Ghaemi, N, Mousavi, Rahim, (1391), Islamic art and architecture in Tabaristan, printing, publishing publications conductivity, Tehran
- [5] Maheralnaqsh, Mahmoud, (1373), brick and role, printing, publishing February, Tehran
- [6] Mahrelnaqsh, Mahmoud, (1381), heritage brickwork Iran, printing, publishing Soroush, Tehran
- [7] Snacks, Nahya, Mir Fakhraie, Vahide, (1393), geometry designs, printing, publishing Fkhrakya, Tehran

- [8] Safari, F., (1391), the decorative motifs Forumad Mosque and its use in the design of urban elements, Supervisor doctor J. Snoopy, Tarbiat Modarres University
- [9] Ali Abadi, M., (1391), review designs and inscriptions used in Forumad Mosque in Semnan province, Supervisor doctor Mahnaz Afshar Shayestehfar, Advisor Mohammad Khazaei, Tarbiat Modarres University
- [10] Ansari, M. (1381), decorative art and architecture of Iran (Islamic period, with emphasis on mosques) Art Magazine, Issue 1, page number from 59 to 74, Autumn