

A survey of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz based on the Aesthetics of Islamic Art

Un estudio de la Mezquita Nasir Al-Molk en Shiraz basado en la Estética del Arte Islámico

EÍDOS N°21
Revista Científica de Arquitectura y Urbanismo
ISSN: 1390-5007
revistas.ute.edu.ec/index.php/eidos

¹Samira Ashari, ²Amin Maleka

¹Ph.D student in Industrial Design, Industrial Design Group, Faculty of Design, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran, sa.ashari@tabriziau.ac.ir, ORCID: 0000-0002-5767-2110

²Ph.D student in Geotechnical engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran, amin.maleka@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-7917-6775

Abstract:

Mosque, as one of the most significant buildings of Islamic architecture, has passed its process of formation, evolution or decline over the years influenced by static and dynamic spatial and temporal sub-systems. Principles and criteria of aesthetics in Islamic architecture include form and shape, light and color, decoration, signs and symbols. These principles are not fixed and unchangeable, but are different for each region, culture and tradition, architect and building. Our knowledge about the subject of mosque design and related issues will be enhanced through considering the importance of studying these works and having accurate knowledge about the creators of these works intellectually and practically, which can pave the way for a more accurate design of the architecture of today's mosques. The purpose of this study is to investigate the elements used in the architecture of Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque in Shiraz based on Islamic aesthetics. Accordingly, the major raised questions are: what are the fundamentals used by the builders in the construction of Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque? Did the builders use Islamic aesthetic principles in the construction of this building?

The current study is a descriptive-analytical study in terms of methodology. Subsequently, the information was collected through the study of related documents in the framework of the library. The results of this study show that Iranian aesthetics and Islamic aesthetics have had an impact on Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque. All the necessary elements for a sense of spiritual peace have been gathered in this mosque. The juxtaposition of light, color, lancet arches, and other elements in addition to the scientific support that is of particular importance, have an aesthetic perspective and there is a complementary connection between them.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Islamic Art, Islamic Architecture, Nasir Al-Molk Mosque, Noor.

Resumen

La mezquita, como uno de los edificios más significativos de la arquitectura islámica, ha pasado su proceso de formación, evolución o declive a lo largo de los años, influenciado por subsistemas espaciales y temporales estáticos y dinámicos. Los criterios de la estética en la arquitectura islámica incluyen figura y forma, luz y color, decoración, signos y símbolos. Estos principios no son fijos e inmutables, sino que son diferentes para cada región, cultura, tradición, arquitecto y edificación. Nuestro conocimiento sobre el diseño de mezquitas, y los temas relacionados a éste, mejorará al considerar la importancia de estudiar una serie de trabajos, y contar con un conocimiento más preciso intelectual y práctico sobre sus creadores, lo que puede allanar el camino para un diseño más exacto de la arquitectura de mezquitas en la actualidad. El propósito de este estudio es investigar los elementos utilizados en la arquitectura de la Mezquita Nasir-ol-Molk en Shiraz basados en la estética islámica. En consecuencia, las principales interrogantes planteadas son: ¿cuáles son los fundamentos utilizados por los constructores en la edificación de la Mezquita Nasir-ol-Molk? ¿Usaron los constructores principios estéticos islámicos en la construcción de este edificio?

En términos metodológicos, la presente investigación es un estudio descriptivo-analítico. Posteriormente, la información se recolecta a través del estudio de documentos relacionados a este tema dentro del marco teórico de la biblioteca. Los resultados de este trabajo investigativo muestran que la estética iraní y la estética islámica han tenido un impacto en la Mezquita Nasir-ol-Molk. En esta mezquita se han reunido todos los elementos necesarios para una sensación de paz espiritual. La yuxtaposición de luz, color, arcos ojivales y otros elementos de apoyo científico de particular importancia, tienen una perspectiva estética y existe una conexión complementaria entre ellos.

Palabras Clave: Estética, Arte Islámico, Arquitectura Islámica, Mezquita Nasir Al-Molk, Noor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mosques and religious buildings have long had a special position among Iranian people. The decoration of Iranian mosques was initially limited to brick and plaster (Jahanbakhsh, 2016, p. 108). Mosque is considered as one of the most important Islamic architectural buildings. Considering many fixed and variable principles, the thinking path of the creation of the works of artists who made mosques is hidden in their design since the emergence of mosques. Architects, at different times and places, tried to manifest the result of their intellectual, verbal and practical efforts in the soil and in the creation of the holiest Islamic buildings. By referring to these works and having an accurate intellectual and practical knowledge of these architects, our knowledge of the subject of mosque design and related issues will be improved. This could pave the way for a more accurate design for the architecture of today's mosques but this knowledge and recognition has wide and complex dimensions in line with the subject of architecture. One of the methods of this recognition is direct observation of the architecture of mosques and trying to recognize the significant overt or covert similarities of the architecture of these buildings which represents a kind of accepted order and method of architecture that in case of further analysis reveals many constant spatial and temporal principles (Tavakolian, 2016, p. 90).

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Islamic art aesthetics. Aesthetics in architecture is more complex than other arts because human experience in architecture is different from that of other arts. The experience of the architectural space is personal and based on the psychology of perception. This is because the observer is inside the space and is affected by that place based on his intellectual structures and the degree of dependence on the structures in the architectural space, such as used materials or lighting conditions. However, in the study of architectural space, man is a part of the life of that space. Therefore, it can be said that architectural spaces provide the basis for aesthetic experiences for human. The purpose of architectural works, unlike works of other fine arts, rarely

happens to be just aesthetics. Therefore, the architect has a special ability of paying attention to the possibilities of making the work beautiful in addition to performing the practical purpose of art simultaneously. For this purpose, he must try in various ways to align aesthetic goals with practical goals. A historical, descriptive-analytical method was used in the present study. Study of documents related to Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque by library, observation and field methods was used for data collection. Therefore, the research questions in the present study are: what are the fundamentals used by the builders in the construction of Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque? Did the builders use Islamic aesthetic principles in the construction of this building?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To answer the questions in the introduction, all papers, books and thesis in this field have been reviewed. After studying the researcher, she concluded that the study of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque based on examples of Islamic aesthetics had not been done comprehensively in the past. Avaznejad and Sheibani (2021) in her article entitled "Study of Color the Architecture of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz" examines the color palette in the architectural decorations of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque. The article "Investigating the sense of spirituality created by the combination of light and color in Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz" seeks to find the roots of the concept of light and color in Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in creating a sense of spirituality (Zamanpour et al., 2016). Ghochani and Mousavi (2022) wrote an article entitled "Spiritual reading influenced by colors in the architecture of mosques based on the movement path of the worshiper (case study: Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz)" with the aim of recognizing the components affecting the mystical reading of colors used in Nasir Al-Molk Mosque. The influence of each of them on the spiritual and mystical states of the worshiper is considered. The article entitled "Evaluation and Ranking of Factors Affecting the Perception of Spirituality Sense in the Interior of Mosques; Case study: Nasir Al-Molk Mosque-Shiraz" examines the impact of factors affecting the perception of spirituality in the interior

of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz (Maleki et al., 2020). Also in the article entitled "Architectural criticism of Nasir al-Molk mosque in Shiraz based on religious texts", Akbarzadeh et al. (2019) consider the purpose of their research to judge and critique the distinguishing features in the design of Nasir al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz based on religious criteria. The article is entitled "Studying elements of color and light in Islamic architecture with emphasis on Nasir-ol-Molk and Moshir mosques in Shiraz" which is a practical study of elements of color and light in Islamic architecture of the mosques where Shiraz Nasir-ol-Molk and Moshir mosques are investigated as a case study (Alizadeh, 2015). In the present study, the Nasir al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz has been analyzed based on examples of Islamic aesthetics in all dimensions, which has not been so comprehensively studied in any of the articles and books, and each time only a part of it has been analyzed. Analysis is located.

3. AESTHETICS

Although the discussion of aesthetics in philosophy dates back to the time of Socrates and Plato; aesthetics as an independent branch of philosophy was first used by Alexander Bomgarten in the eighteenth century (Hashemnezhad, 2012, p. 138). In a book of the same name, Bomgarten first used Aesthetic in the meaning of sensory cognition. Then, he used it to perceive sensory beauty especially the perceptible beauty of art (Goldman, 2008, p. 255). Immanuel Kant used this word in the rules of aesthetics and made the use of this word more common. Gradually, this term became a branch of philosophy dealing with beauty and art. Philosophers and thinkers in the field of aesthetics have different definitions for this term. For example, "it is a branch of philosophy discussing the nature of beauty" (Budd, 2007, p. 34), "Aesthetics is the philosophy of art" (Langfeld, 1920, p. 28) or "Aesthetics is any kind of general art research, whether it is philosophical or scientific" (Beardsley, 1981, p. 85). This term is generally used to refer to the concepts of beauty and art. Aesthetics used to be considered a branch of philosophy, but today it is a combination of philosophy, psychology and sociology of art. Therefore,

the new aesthetics is not limited to what is "beautiful" in art, but is an attempt to discover the sources of human sensitivity to artistic forms and the relationship of art with other areas of culture (Pakbaz, 2014, p. 287). In aesthetic theory, the main issue is whether objects have aesthetic features in nature or whether they look beautiful as a result of perception based on a particular aesthetic method. In other words, are observable aesthetic features inherent in objects or these features exist only in the human mind (Reyhani, 2015, p. 3).

4. ISLAMIC ART

Some believe that any art with a religious theme is a religious art but it is not necessarily sacred while any sacred art is necessarily religious. According to this definition, art can have no religious theme but be religious due to its spiritual influence, and it is considered an art with a religious but anti-religion theme. Religious and sacred art is art with the presence of God (Fahimifar, 2009, p. 78). People like Bookhart believe that art is basically a face (Burkhart, 2014, p. 7). She believed "Renaissance and Baroque art, mainly concerned with religious subjects, is not religious. Form and meaning must be similar and in harmony with each other and be expressed through a formal language. Sacred art is an inner vision". Islamic art is a type of art similar to religious art in its foundations such as the spirit of symbolism which is commonly found in religious arts. But this art has its own aesthetic differences as a result of differences that basically separate Islam from other religions (Fahimifar, 2009, p. 78).

Islamic art is one of the glorious periods in the history of art and one of the most valuable human achievements in the field of art including various types of art such as architecture, calligraphy, painting and the like. Islamic art is not a kind of art dealing only with the religious issues of Islam. The term "Islamic" refers not only to religion, but also to the rich and diverse culture of the peoples of the lands in which Islam is practiced. Also, those concepts and artistic cases in the Islamic societies that have been created under the influence of regional factors and indigenous culture are also called Islamic art (Balkhari, 2016, p. 12). In general, in the sacred art, in which

the art of Islam is also a subset of it, patterns and images show a state of thinking and enlightenment that are not in search of apparent harmony and presentation of an image like reality (Adibnia, 2016, p. 2). In Islamic art, beauty is a reflection of God's beauty. In addition, beauty is an integral part of truth and its manifestation, so it is an essential component of any authentic work of art. Islam never separates beauty from productivity or art from making and production. The change that has taken place as a result of the process of modernization in the tastes and talents of Muslims has caused many of them to lose this inner sense of beauty, dignity, harmony and honor that is a hallmark of Islamic art, as it is with all genuine manifestations, so is the spirit of Islam (Nasr, 2007, pp. 111-113).

5. ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Most elements of Islamic architecture are inspired by two ancient traditions namely Iranian architecture on the one hand and Byzantine architecture on the other. From the time of the conquest of the Sassanid and Byzantine lands by the Muslims, all the experiences and technical knowledge of these two ancient civilizations were at the service of the new religion. However, as we know, the house of the Prophet — Medina Mosque— was built with wooden pillars. Such architecture, as the most prominent architecture of Medina, could not offer anything new in terms of architecture to the lands that became the realm of Islam. Mosques started with a simple design but the cultural and artistic traditions of different nations influenced the original designs over time and magnificent buildings emerged. Although these buildings had similarities in location and principles; each



Figure 1. Exterior of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque with a play of light and color
Source: www.intoday.ir

of them represented the architectural traditions of their region. Generally, the architecture of Iran, Byzantium and a little North Africa has been the architectural model of Islamic mosques (Javadi, 2014, p. 173) (Figure 1). Islamic architecture is derived from the language of the Qur'an and shows the richness of Islamic civilization using the spirit of spirituality. This is how the belief in monotheism and faith in the teachings of Islam as the aesthetic idea of Islam is manifested in Islamic architecture. Architecture was considered as an art representing identity and culture in addition to color variations. This was done in such a way that the manifestation of architecture was clearly visible in the Figures or carvings. But the art of architecture emphasizes the use of artistic masterpieces and decorative achievements on walls, ceilings, columns, windows and doors. And even gardens and ponds are combined with architecture in a way that increases the impact on the viewer. Perhaps unity and diversity in Islamic architecture is one of its most prominent features. This unity is the main factor in the development and formation of the identity of Islamic architecture and religious institutions. Thus, the methods of Islamic architecture have been different in each of the Islamic countries but the unity between them is well observed (Kiani, 2016, p. 124).

The relationship between Aesthetics and Islamic Architecture Art

Aesthetics in architecture is more complex than other arts because the human experience in architecture is different from the experience of other arts. In the study of artistic objects and works, man is an observer and thinker but in the study of architectural space, man is a part of the life of that space. Therefore, it can be said that architectural spaces provide the basis for aesthetic experiences for humans. Architectural works, contrary to works of other fine arts, rarely have a purely aesthetic purpose. They depend on other conditions that are completely outside the category of art and are concerned with practical usage. Therefore, the special ability of the artist in architecture is that pays attention also to the possibilities of beautifying the work while performing the work with the artistic practical purpose (Groter, 1378,

p. 457). Art and beauty have always been related. It is difficult to fully understand the concept of aesthetics, and its complexity is doubled when we are dealing with built architecture and buildings. To make it possible to understand the concept of beauty in architectural spaces, theorists such as George Santayana offer a concept called a pleasant or enjoyable environment alongside a beautiful environment. They believe that a beautiful environment is an environment that is enjoyable to the viewer. Based on the findings of perception psychology and environmental psychology, it is possible to identify the factors affecting the perception of the pleasant environment. As a result, by recognizing and compiling these factors, various types of aesthetic experiences related to architectural spaces can be classified. In this approach, different types of aesthetic features of architectural spaces are identified by examining the features of a enjoyable and pleasant environment according to the psychological characteristics of humans. In other words, a beautiful environment is an environment that provides pleasurable sensory experiences, has a pleasant perceptual structure and evokes symbols of pleasure. This means that three categories are enjoyable and pleasant for the user and observer of the architectural space:

- Inspirational energies such as light intensity, color, sound, smell, etc.
- Form-based features that shape the environment via the structure of surfaces, textures, brightness, and color.
- Associations created by patterns (Turner & Penne, 2002, p. 145).

Principles and criteria of architectural aesthetics are not constant and unchangeable principles (according to Gestalt theory) but these principles are different for each region, each culture and tradition, each architect, and each building. In general, important aesthetic criteria in architecture include the following:

- Form and shape: Form is one of the main criteria of beauty divided into two groups: regular and irregular.
- Color: The effects of color on observers depend on three factors: the

place where the color is used, culture, and social and psychological factors.

- Signs and symbols: The spiritual content of a symbol can be expressed in architecture in different ways: attention to colors, attention to the type of materials in the structure of the building, lighting.

- Decoration: An important element in architecture that pays more attention to form than meaning. Perhaps it can be said that it has no meaning dimension at all and the emphasis is on form (Warberton, 2016, p. 187).

6. THE EFFECT OF IRANIAN CULTURE ON ARCHITECTURE

Architecture in Iranian culture contains many intrinsic meanings and concepts. Behind every architectural form lies an inner concept and content. Man uses external forms and objects to express his inner content and to depict what is inside him. These meanings and concepts do not undergo transient changes. But every human culture, at any time and place, offers a new policy in line with the fundamental goals of society to reform and develop its views (Khosrojerdi, 2016, p. 3).

Original Islamic-Iranian architecture, relying on components such as culture and climate, has predicted the human needs of residents for many years and has artistically used them as a basis for the formation of their spaces. For example, we can refer to the formation of external and internal space in the original architecture of Iranian houses. It seems that such spaces have been formed to meet some cultural needs. Customs, religious ceremonies, morale, ethics, thought and belief of generations are clearly reflected in Iranian architecture



Figure 2. Yard of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www. In today. ir

(Goodarzi Soroush, 2015, p. 5). Man is composed of three inseparable stages of thought and imagination, psyche, and soul; so, in Iranian culture, every human body has an outside and an inside part that are different but not separate and distinct from each other. The journey from the outside to the inside is manifested both in the action and in the artistic work of the artist. While working with the object and its material deformation, the artist tries to bring it closer to his inner part. This quality also affects his audience.

Culture is the interface between the goal (perfectionism) and the plan (art, science, religion). In loyalty to the culture and art of a land, the issue is not the preservation and repetition of past forms but a dynamic and creative look is one of the basic necessities. Architecture conveys meaning not form. Form is one of the most prominent architecturally influential features of culture. Preserving the fundamental, cultural and artistic factors in the building makes the soulless architectural work move towards a complete and significant architecture. The architectural building must meet the spiritual needs of human beings in terms of spirituality and the afterlife in addition to meeting the worldly needs and material life of man. Iranian architecture makes building with the material in such a way that it distances itself from its material form and approaches its inner and ideal form. For example, arches, in addition to the role of covering, approached the higher level of their existence that is the arch of the universe or the heavens and the dome of sky. For this purpose, the arches were always created with bricks, tiles and plaster, using Rasmibandi, Yazidibandi and Mogharnas, representing as hedge breakers, and starry buildings. The light shone into the building with its delicate holes. Sometimes it even



Figure 3. Light in the nave of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www.asriran.com

passed through engraved colorful glass which was reminiscent of imaginary forms. The stone, characterized by opacity and roughness, appears so clear and delicate when light passes through it so that its materiality is forgotten and spirituality is revealed. Mirror and glass also make the building look light, soft and transparent due to their inherent transparency. Therefore, the duty of the Iranian architect is to create a place for human life in accordance with the definition that Iranian culture has of human beings, which is not limited only to its form. The Iranian architect considers the human habitat to have several levels, each of which satisfies one of the needs of human existence. In the construction of the building, the complexities of human beings and their need to live in a place that is compatible with their existential characteristics, including their material and spiritual dimension, are considered (Khosrojerdi, 2016, p. 4) (Figure 3).

7. NASIR-OL-MOLK MOSQUE

The word mosque literally means the place of prostration and worship. In Islamic ideology, mosque has been established as a common religious-political center. The best mosque in big cities located in the center of the city is called Jame Mosque. Jame mosques are usually the most important architectural works of the city. This is so important that some Islamic cities are famous for their Jame Mosque. Despite the changes in the construction of mosques, the common point of all mosques was that they conveyed messages to the believers as non-verbal symbols. Mosque is not the only one-dimensional means of mass communication that merely conveys the divine message. In addition to conveying its message, mosque is the center of determining the message, its form and its effects. This feature of the mosque distinguishes it from any other places (Shayestehfar, 2008, p. 66).

Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque is one of Shiraz historical mosques located in Goodarban neighborhood and Lotfali Khanzand Street. This mosque dates back to Qajar era and is slightly influenced by Ottoman architecture; it was built from 1293 to 1305 by Hassan Ali Nasir-ol-Molk. The foundation of this mosque equals to 2212 square meters and its area equals

to 2980 square meters. The direction of the entrance door is to the north of the mosque and it is located in a large arch. In the large courtyard of this mosque, two nights pray halls can be seen. Its western night pray hall with a brick cover is more artistically significant. This night pray hall is a summer night pray hall (Tavakolian & Bahmani Kazeruni, 2016, p. 99) (Figure 4).

Considering Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque and the clear and intense effects of the Zandieh period on it, in fact, we see the re-manifestation of mosque decorations such as Vakil Mosque in the facade of Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque (Jamali, 2013, p. 88). The colorful glass used in the beautiful doors and windows of this mosque has created a play of light and joyful color inside the mosque, and these colors of colorful glass can be seen only in the morning. Watching the morning sunlight passing through colorful glass and then falling on the design of Iranian carpets is so magical that it seems as if it belongs to another world. Be a kind of person with the least religious beliefs in this world, you may feel that your hands are approaching each other for worship by seeing the genius in the lighting of this mosque (Shaterian, 2012, p. 132) (Figure 2).

8. INVESTIGATING NASIR ALMOLK MOSQUE BASED ON ISLAMIC AESTHETICS REALIZATIONS

Islamic Aesthetics: Since monotheism (Towhid) is considered as the first pillar of Islamic beliefs, then the reflection of this belief in Islamic art has caused unity to become the main pillar of Islamic art. The aesthetics of Islamic art is based on plurality in unity and unity in plurality. This implies monotheism and circle shape is a symbol of universe, the center of which is the creator of the world creating the main shape of decorations (in Islamic tiling, rosettes reflect this feature aesthetically). The shape of the circle is such that it directs the viewer's look from the scattering points to a main point which is the center of the circle. The aesthetic rules of religious art are formed on the basis of religious beliefs. Artistic expression through symbol is a way to get closer to spirituality and peace. By doing so, which may be translated as "resorting," the soul finds peace (Nezhdat Arzan, 2009, p. 331).

Tiling: This art, which has been used in decorating the architecture of Iranian mosques and other historical monuments such as pottery since ancient time, shows the fervor, skill and taste of Iranian artists. Simple geometric designs, curved lines, semicircles, triangles, parallel lines with a perpendicular line drawn on them, various patterns of flowers, plants, leaves and animals that are inspired by nature as well as various Persian scripts written on tiles has been built and installed for mosques, has given a special balance, color and manifestation to mosque buildings (Mehrpooya, 1997, p. 564).

Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque is made of Moqelli tiles, a combination of simple tiles with bricks and plaster. Also, the painted colors on the tiles induce a

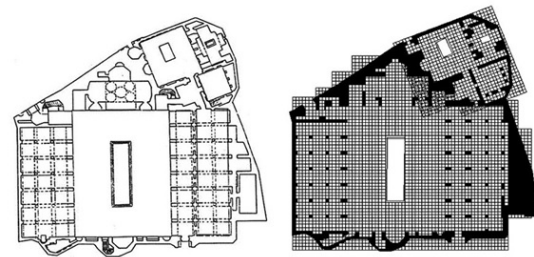


Figure 4: Plan of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www.aftabtravel.com



Figure 5: Tiling of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www.akharinkhabar.ir

heavenly atmosphere and create peace of mind. Positive and negative atmosphere observed in tile work of Islamic buildings represents the correlated concept of soul and body. Geometric patterns and plants are also used in tiles because the basis of these designs is a circle shape and the circle in Islamic art is associated with a symbol of “perfection”. Circle also draws the viewer’s attention to the “center”, the point that is everywhere and nowhere (Figure 5).

Windows: Windows usually have beautiful patterns in which the play between light and shadow creates lively images. But simultaneously the world is shown as if we are looking at it behind the scenes. Windows like many of the patterns used for decoration reflect Islamic beliefs about people’s perception of the world. They create visual effects in which reality and fantasy are intertwined, as if the faces are seen behind the scenes and breaks down the boundaries of the real world by repeatedly repetition of one thing (Nezhdat Arzan, 2008, pp. 332-333). Lattice windows create a balance between outside and inside light. Looking from the inside out, this balance prevents intense sunlight and prevents the eyes from getting tired due to the light. The designs used in the construction of lattice windows often can

regulate the light inside the room. Lattice windows diffuse and modulate intense outside light and these windows pass all the light into the room when the light is not intense (Bamat, 2015, p. 45) (Figure 6).

Light: Lighting is one of the most important features in the physical realm in all environments (Kenz & Kers cited, 2012, p. 9, in Ahmadpoor Samani). The role of light in Islamic architecture is a comprehensive emphasis on the principle of manifestation. Light is responsible for clarifying the material and reducing the difficulty and coldness of the building. Light is scattered as a manifestation of existence in the mosque space to be one of the constituent elements of the perceptual space. The element of illuminating the mosque and strengthening the light system of mosques, in addition to being a mystical and spiritual symbol, is also a part of the mosque’s decorations. This illumination performs the task of transmitting information well and sometimes raises the human mind beyond material limitations (Zamanpour et al., 2020, p. 9). Light is present in Islamic architecture both externally and internally (mystically) and it is necessary to be considered. Light is a sign of moving towards the truth and has no physical state (Von Meiss, 2014, p. 258). “Light is the most effective part of Iranian architecture, not only as a physical component but also as a symbol of divine wisdom as well as existence”. Light is a spiritual presence that penetrates the weight of matter, transforming it into a new form that is worthy of being the abode of the human soul. The essence of this soul is rooted in the world of light which is nothing but the spiritual world (Ardalan, 2012. Foreword).

Architecture welcomes light in two ways: in the first state, it offers its outside to light, and in the second state, it invites light into itself. In the first state, the light reveals its beauties and ugliness with architectural breakers in the game of shadow and semi-shadow. And in the second state, it is the architecture that allows light to enter the building in a special way with a selective quality. The light sometimes opens the door completely to the building’s presence, sometimes makes sacred gods and sometimes, by taking it out of its monotheistic state, calls for a multitude of



Figure 6. Windows of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www.asriran.com

colors (Khalantari Khandani, 2016, p. 6). In Iranian architectural spaces, the hierarchy of light and darkness has been carefully used to move and direct from one space to another. In this hierarchy, it is the intensity of light and darkness in the spaces that determines their importance (Von Meiss, 2014, p. 259). In Iranian tradition, the source and origin of light (sunlight) always enters indirectly with reflection. in case of direct entry, which usually shines through roof light window in a narrow radius and does not lose its valuable basis (Nadimi, 2007, pp. 103-97) (Figure 3).

Color: Color is visible to the human eye only when there is light on the color (Nurelawati et al., 2012, p. 2). Color, like light and its effects, is another important element that directly affects people's emotions and can create a feeling of health, happiness, sadness, passivity or activity. This effect can increase or decrease the performance of individuals (Ahmadpoor Samani & Ahmadpoor Samani, 2012, p. 7). "Color is a part of our conscious, semi-conscious and unconscious self. We react in our behavior by receiving color. "These reactions are not only psychological or perceptual, but may also be physiological" (Memarian et al., 2014, p. 3). Different colors such as warm colors (such as red and orange) and cold colors (such as blue and green) have different psychological meanings for people's feelings (Ahmadpoor Samani & Ahmadpoor Samani, 2012, p. 7).

Color, along with light, texture, form and shape, is one of the elements that affect people's visual perception of the environment. Using color, you can integrate and unify the space or make it distinct and recognizable. All these factors regardless of other environmental factors and spatial characteristics, cause two identical spaces with different color combinations to have different effects on human perception (Akhshik, 1390, pp. 7-8). All these factors, regardless of other environmental factors and spatial FEATURES, cause two identical spaces with different color combinations have different effects on human perception (Akhshik, 2012, pp. 7-8). Iranian architecture has been ranked among the most colorful architectures globally by architectural experts such as Arthur Pope and color specialists in architecture such as Tom Porter and Louis

Sveirnev (Avaznejad & Sheibani, 2019, p. 45). In *The Architecture of Iran*, Arthur Pope describes the triumph of the shape and color of Iranian architecture as follows:

Most of the architecture of Iran is simple in terms of volume and design and inspires a spirit of calm and confidence from afar. This is especially the case when using color. "Various designs and intricate decorations are created. In most periods of Iranian architecture, vivid and varied colors have reached a level that has never been seen before. (Pope, 1986, p. 54)

Color selection in internal space architecture can affect a person's feelings more than any other independent factor, and it can turn the boring and monotonous atmosphere of the internal space into a pleasant and living place. In interior design, the emphasis of color is on form (Cheshmeh Sohrabi et al., 2012, p. 16). Color represents a plurality that is inherently related to unity. Color is considered as an important spiritual factor in Islamic architecture painting. In Islamic architecture, the importance and place of color has been completely considered. According to Henry Carbone in "Iranian Mysticism", colors become an indicator for the mystic to judge her light-mystical status. The colors obtained from the radiation of light symbolize the manifestation of unity in plurality and the dependence of plurality on unity. Each color is a symbol of the state and light itself, without being limited to that particular color (Bamat, 2015, p. 53) (Figure 7).

Spiral columns and arches:

One of the most important structural and compositional symbolic forms is "spiral" form. It includes both introverted and extroverted movement, it is a manifestation



Figure 7. Color in the nave of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque
Source: www.mizboon.com

of the inner being and the outer world, and it means having both features of continuous change and stability at the same time. In paintings, the spiral form is an important compositional principle for arrangement of major visual movements. This is also used in buildings. Another decorative feature of architecture is "expansion of structures". It is believed that the "expansion of structures" is the basis of the whole world and the whole universe. It includes patterns that are derived from some basic geometric shapes and are a symbol of the relationship between man and God, or a symbol of some basic movements that are thought to form the basis of temporal processes and spatial structures (Nezhdat Arzan, 2009, p. 331) (Figure 3).

9. CONCLUSION

The arrival of Islam in any land has been accompanied by the use of art in its service in that place. Islam has been combined with that art and its theme has been directed towards Islam in that land. As when Islam came to Iran, the Sassanid arches, as a decoration of the holy place, used for dome chambers. In ancient architecture, various building components and materials were often used not only for their beauty but also for their properties. Arch and minaret are supports for vertical and lateral forces as well as a beautiful sign to see mosques in the city. The arch gives a feeling of depth and width. There is a unique rhythm of mystical light and many colors have a unique rhythm. Transparency and the division of large surfaces into small components with good proportions eliminate the weight of the building mass and the light merges with the building and makes it integrated.

Mosques and their components have both symbolic and functional aspects. There are two types of beliefs about Islamic aesthetics:

1. Traditionalists also called esotericists or hermeneutics. They considered Islamic art as a sacred art. They considered Islamic art as the result of understanding mysticism, tradition and the Qur'an while a real artist was considered as a great mystic and Sufi. However, the change that took place in art as a result of Islam was in terms of content, not structure.

2. Historians, those who did not have a sacred view of art, they considered art as a normal thing and art products as a necessity for a better life, they did not have a supernatural view of art, and this group did not accept the opinion of the traditionalists. Perhaps sometimes a masterpiece of art was formed by a person who was skilled but not very religious and mystical. Many principles used in mosques and Islamic architecture were scientific such as light and arches but the paintings used in them have been greatly influenced by Islam. It is better to look at many elements of Islamic aesthetics from a different perspective and they should be considered as effects of Islamic beliefs on the aesthetic understanding of people not as if aesthetics were born and established in Islam. Many of these elements existed before Islam and religion of Islam has changed them like architecture and its elements. Arches, light, paint, windows, tiles and geometric shapes were also used in Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, and these elements were used before Islam too. But in Islamic buildings, they were used frequently due to the positive effect of these elements.

Islam has collected and used some of the best aesthetic elements so that the audience feels serenity when sees them. It also gives a detailed and scientific look at many elements and issues, considering a background for each of them, and collected the best factors introduced to the Muslim artist in various ways. In all cases, Islam has tried to give the best and most aesthetic advice to its artists, whether on the subject of building a mosque or preparing a miniature, so that the obtained result is worthy of Islamic art. The present study completely confirms the views of traditionalists, not historians. According to the author, Islam has an aesthetic background. The issue of aesthetics is strongly related to culture and geography and is influenced by them. As a result, both Iranian and Islamic aesthetics are effective in Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque. Perhaps it can be said that the word Islamic aesthetics does not belong to any of the Islamic countries. This word is too general. Every case of aesthetic is influenced by its region with Islamic principles that are manifested in their theme. The arch, which is used in most Islamic mosques and is considered as a symbol of Throne of Heaven, has

been used in a special way in each Islamic region and has created its own aesthetics. All the necessary elements for a sense of spiritual peace have been gathered in this mosque. The juxtaposition of light, color, lancet arches and other elements in addition to the scientific support that is of particular importance, have an aesthetic perspective and there is a complementary connection between them. This aesthetic view has been expressed in various forms in different parts of the world with an almost constant scientific content to represent a safe and quiet place for their audience.

10. REFERENCES

Ahmadpoor Samani, S. & Ahmadpoor Samani, S. (2012), The impact of Indoor Lighting on Student's Learning Performance in Learning Environment: A Knowledge Internalization Perspective, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(24). https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_24_Special_Issue_December_2012/14.pdf

Akbarzadeh, M., Piravi Vanak, M. & Mozaffar, F. (2019). Architectural criticism of Nasir al-Molk mosque in Shiraz based on religious texts. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 16(78), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.22034/BAGH.2019.104311.3283>

Akhshik, S. (2012). Investigation of the place and influence of color and light symphony in the postmodern architecture of libraries, Shamseh, Electronic Journal of Libraries Organization, Museums and Astan Ghods Razavi Documentation Center, Volume 3, Numbers 10 and 11.

Adibnia, F. & Adibnia, M. (2016). *Manifestation of mysticism and spiritual symbols in the architecture of Islamic cities*. International Conference on Architecture, Urbanism, Civil Engineering and Art; Future Horizons, Looking to the Past. Jahad University.

Ardalan, N. & Bakhtiari, L. (2012). *Sense of Unity, the Tradition of Sufism in Iranian Architecture*, T: Jalili, Vandad. Elme Meamar Publishing.

Alizadeh, S. (2015). *Studying color and light elements in Islamic architecture emphasizes Nasir Almoluk and Moshir*

mosques in Shiraz. International Conference on Architecture, Urban Planning, Civil Engineering, Art and Environment; Future Horizons, Looking to the Past. Jahad University, March 2016.

Avaznejad, F. & Sheibani, H. (2019). Color in Arsen City of Zandieh Shiraz. *Journal of Studies in Color World*, 9(2), 43-52. https://jscw.icrc.ac.ir/article_81621.html?lang=en

Avaznejad, F. & Sheibani, H. (2021). Study of Color in the Architecture of Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz. *Journal of Studies in Color World*, 11(1), 23-34. https://jscw.icrc.ac.ir/article_81760.html?lang=en

Balkhari Ghahi, H. (2016). *Mystical Principles of Islamic Art and Architecture*. Third Edition. Surah Mehr Publishing.

Bamat, N. A. (2015). *Islamic City*. T: Halimi, M. H. First Edition. Printing and Publishing.

Beardsley, M. (1981). *Aesthetics*. Hackett. Barrio.

Budd, M. (2007). The Aesthetics. In *The Routledge Encyclopedia*. Edited by Bery Gaut and Dominic Goldman, Mclver Lopes.

Burkhart, T. (2014). *Sacred Art (Principles and Methods)*. T: Sattari, J, 7th edition. Soroush Publications.

Cheshmeh Sohrabi, M. Rahim Salmani, A. & Rahim Salmani, A. (2012). The effect of color on the interior architecture of university libraries. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, 14(1).

Fahimifar, A. (2010). Research on the Aesthetics of Islamic Art, Research on Culture and Art. First Year, No. 2, Summer 2009, 73-82.

Ghochani, M. & Mousavi, S. M. (2022). *Spiritual reading influenced by colors in the architecture of mosques based on the movement path of the worshiper (Case study: Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz)*, *Haft Hesar Journal of Environmental Studies*, 39, 57-72.

Grotter, Jürgen (1999). *Aesthetics in Architecture*, T: Pakzad, J. Homayoun, A, 1st Edition, Tehran: Shahid Beheshti University Press.

- Goodarzi S., Khalil. Emadi, S M J (2015). *Islamic Architecture as an Umbrella for Iranian Architecture (Concepts, Definitions)*. International Conference on Architecture, Urban Planning, Civil Engineering, and Art; Future Horizons, Looking to the Past. Jahad University, March 2016.
- Goldman, A. (2008). The Aesthetic. In *The Routledge companion to Aesthetic*. Edited by Bery Gaut and Dominic Mclver Lopes.
- Hashemnezhad, H. (2012). Aesthetics in the philosophy of Sadr al-Muta'allehin. *Journal of Philosophy*, 39(2), 137-161.
- Jahanbakhsh, H. (2016). An investigation of the place of decorations and tile patterns in Iranian mosques. *Journal of Visual Arts Arrangement*, 4th Year, No. 10, 108-117, Fall 2015.
- Jamali, S. H. & Marati, M. (2013). A Comparative Study of Tile Decorations in the Architecture of Mosques of Safavid and Qajar Periods Based on Four Visual Examples. *Journal of Art University*, 10, 81-94. Fall and Winter 2012.
- Javadi, A. (2014). Iranian Architecture: 84 articles by 33. *Iranian researchers*, 2, 1st Edition. Behnegar Publishing.
- Khosrojerdi, N. & Mahmoudi, M (2016). *From the architectural heritage of Iran's past to contemporary architecture*. International Conference on Architecture, Urbanism, Civil Engineering and Art; Future Horizons, Looking to the Past. University Jihad, March 2016.
- Kalantari Khandani, H., Varmzyar, H., Hosseini Gohari, P., Seif Alahi Dehmiri, M. T. (2016). *Light in Islamic Architecture*. International Conference on Architecture, Urbanism, Civil Engineering and Art; Future Horizons, Looking to the Past. Jahad University, March 2016.
- Kiani, M. Y. (2016). *History of Iranian Art in the Islamic Period*. 17th Edition. Samt Publications.
- LangFeld, H. S. (1920). *The Aesthetic Attitude*. New York.
- Memarian, G. H., Azimi, S. & Kaboudi, M. (2014). I am investigating the roots of the use of blue color in the windows of traditional residential buildings (a case study of Oraman residential buildings). *Quarterly Journal of Islamic Architectural Research*, 3, 1st Year.
- Mehrpooya, J. (1997). Arrays of Traditional Architecture in Iranian Mosques. *Art Quarterly, Summer and Autumn*, 76(33), 556-573.
- Maleki, R., Bayzidi, Q. & Yoonessi, A. (2020). Evaluation and Ranking of Factors Affecting the Perception of Spirituality Sense in the Interior of Mosques; Case study: Nasir Al-Molk Mosque-Shiraz. *Journal of Studies On Iranian-Islamic City*, 10(40), 45-75.
- Nadimi, H., Kelkdoost (2007). Ten articles of art and architecture. Editor: Mehdi Oghabi, Isfahan: Municipal Cultural and Recreational Organization. Isfahan.
- Nasr, S. H. (2007). *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*. T: Salehi, Mohammad, First Edition. Suhrawardi Research and Publishing Office.
- Nezhdat Arzan, J. (2008). The Origin of Art in Religion: Islamic Aesthetics: Another Way to Knowledge, *Aesthetics Quarterly*, 19, 335-325. T: Saberipour, M.
- Pakbaz R. (2014). Encyclopedia of Art. 13th edition. Contemporary Culture.
- Pope, A. (1986). *Iranian Architecture The Victory of Shape and Color*. Yassavoli Publications.
- Shaterian, R. (2012). *Architectural Analysis, Mosques*. First Edition. Noorpardazan Publications.
- Shayestehfar, M. (2008). Inscription decorations of Vakil Mosque in Shiraz. *Mah Book Monthly*, 120, September 2007, 75-64.
- Turner, A. & Penn, A. (2002) *Encoding Natural Movement as an Agent-Based System: An Investigation into Human Pedestrian Behavior in the Built Environment*. *Environment and Planning, B Planning and Design* 29(4), 473-490. <https://doi.org/10.1068/b12850>
- Tavaklian, Z. & Bahmani Kazeruni, S. (2016). A study of organizing the night prayer hall in Shiraz mosques. *Quarterly Journal of Islamic Architectural Research*, 3(8), 89-103.

Von Meiss, P. (2014). *A looking at the principles of architecture from form to place, along with analysis and analogy with the principles of Iranian architecture*. T: Ayvazian, Simon. University of Tehran Press.

Warburton, N. (2015). *Alphabet of Philosophy*. T: Massoud Olya. Second Edition, Ghoghnoos Publications. En el texto está 2016

Zamanpor, G. et al. (2016). *Investigating the sense of spirituality created by the combination of light and color in Nasir Al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz*. Binnial Conference of Community and contemporary architecture, 1, 1-14.