Ornamentation and Quranic Scripts of the Gohar-Shad Mosques of Mashhad and Herat

Dr. Mahnaz Shayestehfar

Abstract

Mosques, the most distinguished feature of Islamic architecture, are not only a place of worship but also a place for social collaboration and communal gatherings. The spirit of Islam is manifested by the mosque and enhanced by artists with embellishments of fine art including calligraphy, painting and tile-work.

For the artist, the holy Quran is a source of inspiration and its verses are the birthplace of ethical and Islamic morals. These morals can be re-presented in mosques in forms of artistic elements as a reminder for the general population. Hence, Quranic verses are embedded within arabesque designs and geometric patterns in order to create outstanding works of art that bewilder any spectator. Such embellishment is visibly seen in the two mosques of Gohar-Shad of Mashhad and Mosala Gohar-Shad of Herat.

The Gohar-Shad mosque of Mashhad has used elements such as mosaic tiles, Mua’qli and brick simultaneously and azure blue is seen at most. The Thulth and Nastaliq script has also added unique exquisiteness to the structure. In the Gohar-Shad mosque of Herat scripts including Kufi, Nastaliq and Mua’qli is depicted. Furthermore, surahs such as Fath, Vaghe’e, and Ayat al Korsi are common between the two structures that are extensively similar in terms of decorative richness and behold many commonalities; however, the ornamentation and Quranic verses of Gohar-Shad mosque of Mashhad are specifically more conspicuous than its counterpart in Heart.

Aims of the Research:

1- Understanding the meaning, significance and scripts of the two Gohar-Shad mosques.

2- Reaching a comparative and contrast analysis of the two structures.

Questions of the Research:

1- What are the significant content, meaning, and scripts applied in the inscriptions of both structures?

2- What are the common similarities and dissimilarities in terms of calligraphy?

Keywords: Architectural ornamentation, Quranic verses, Gohar-Shad mosque, Mashhad, Hera

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1 Head of the Islamic art department of Tarbiat Modares University, faculty of art; shayestm@modares.ac.ir