

Analyses the Contents and Doctrinal function of the Epigraphs in Isfahan's Chaharbagh School-Mosque

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Abstract:

Chaharbagh School-Mosque, known as the treasury of Iranian-Islamic epigraphy, enjoys a particular position. Meanwhile elucidating the doctrine function of this edifice, the present study tries to carry out a content analysis of the themes inscribed therein so as to provide for the grounding based upon which an answer could be found to this main question as to what are the most significant doctrine contents signified by the epigraphs in Chaharbagh School-Mosque? The present developmental research is a descriptive-analytical study in terms of the methodology adopted herein and the findings have been raked based on field studies and library research; in addition, the findings have been, subsequently, analyzed qualitatively. The results indicate that the proportions between the epigraphs' doctrine function and the edifice's use have been extensively reflected in the inscriptions' themes which are of two types, in terms of contents and the type of the message they convey; firstly, the religious-ideological doctrine topics mirroring the important teachings regarding the worships and the remembrances and an emphasis on the Imamate, caliphate and the particular position of His Highness Ali (peace be upon him) in line with Safavid era's Shiite religious policy and, secondly, the special doctrine contents in the area of accumulating knowledge which embrace the necessity to learn sciences, learning and teaching ethics, superiorities of scholars over prayerful individuals and things of the like

Keywords:

Safavid era, Chaharbagh School-Mosque, teaching contents, content analysis

1. Introduction

The establishment of Safavid Government at early tenth hegira century is a turning point in Islamic Iran's history; because, besides laying the foundation of a unified government in Iran, Twelver Shiism was authenticated (Bakhshi Ostad and Reza'ee, 2015, 216-217). Education and upbringing, as an influential institution, have always been the focal point in Safavid Government and they used to take measures to advance their objectives and educate a vast group of the society through the creation of educational centers where the instructional material revolved about the teaching of the religious sciences and Shiite cognition. Therefore, Safavid sultans and dynasty concentrated greatly on the establishment of schools, as the most important educational institution and ideological sponsor of their government and a great many of schools were constructed by the financial sponsorship of the king, sultanate clan, the fellows of the king court, the holders of governmental positions and the rich benefactors, particularly in the main capital city of this dynasty, Isfahan. Besides their dedication to Twelver Shiite religion, these schools had common features including their fine architecture, architectural decorations and eminent epigraphs (Ashkevari, 2009, 89-90). It is worth mentioning that according to the fact that the Shiite religion was authenticated in Safavid Era, the epigraphs, extant in the religious edifices of the then time, underwent considerable changes in their contents. Besides its huge architectural structure, Chaharbagh School-Mosque, as one of the most important Safavid era religious edifices, exhibits a less frequently seen vastness and diversity in regard of its

decorations and epigraphs in such a manner that it can be considered as the full-length mirror of Safavid era architectural decorations (Hillenbrand, 1994, 229); furthermore, it can be known as a reflection of the religious policies and the intellectual-religious grounds existent in that era. According to the diversity of the contents and the themes used in Chaharbagh epigraphs and in order to offer a more coherent image of such contents and themes, they can be classified and analyzed under certain functions. Thus, the current research paper attempts to, within organized parts, firstly, deal with the succinct recognition of Chaharbagh School-Mosque and then, based on it, it engages in the elaboration of epigraphs' doctrine function in this edifice and, subsequently, studies the typology of the inscriptions' themes and contents and, finally, extracts and classifies the doctrine messages therein by taking advantage of a content analysis approach. The abovementioned stages pave the way for answering to these two following questions: what are the doctrine functions of Chaharbagh School-Mosque epigraphs? And, what are the most important doctrine contents and messages denoted by the inscriptions?

Literature Review:

According to the main constituents of the study, to wit the epigraphs and the Safavid era schools, the existent sources can be divided into two general sets: the first set encompasses the researches on the epigraphs and Safavid era characteristic epigraphy and the second set involves the research on Chaharbagh School-Mosque.

Based on the considerable importance of the epigraphs, especially in Islamic era edifices, there are various studies performed in the format of articles, books and dissertations including Shayestehfar (2002) who, in an article titled "the position of the Holy Quran, Hadith and prayers in Islamic epigraphs", dealt with a brief introduction of the epigraphs' structure and themes (contents) while emphasizing the two historical epochs, namely Timurids and Safavids. The most important results obtained in the article are the followings: the religious concepts and contents including the Holy Quran's Ayat¹, Ahadith² and narrations and prayers have been widely applied in the epigraphs on edifices from Timurids and Safavids' eras and, also, that a number of the Holy Quran's Ayat have been iteratively repeated in a pattern in various inscriptions on the different edifices.

According to the great importance of Chaharbagh School-Mosque, various studies, adopting different approaches such as comparative and descriptive, have been performed.

These studies, except for a few numbers, have dealt with the apparent structure of the edifice. One such study is the research performed by Kiyanmehr and Taghavinejad (2012), called "the comparative study of the contents of tile-work epigraphs in Isfahan's Chaharbagh School and the Safavid era's prevalent beliefs". The study presents precise and detailed information, offered in a tabulated format, regarding the general introduction of the whole building and the variegated contents and themes applied on the epigraphs installed on the edifice and the results show that Safavid era religious buildings' epigraphs and contents, especially in Chaharbagh School-Mosque, are in a close relationship with the religious policy adopted by Safavid kings and the prevalence of Shiite school. Based on the searches for finding relevant study backgrounds concerning the current study subject matter, it seems that not so many studies have adopted a coherent and systematic approach to the inscriptions in Isfahan's schools and school-mosques, particularly Chaharbagh School-Mosque and this is clearly indicative of the necessity to do further research in this regard.

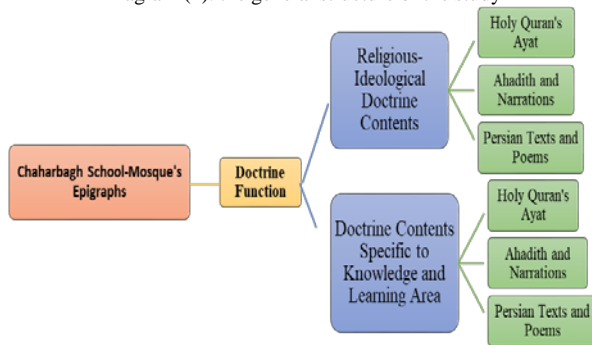
Research Method

The present study is enumerated among the developmental researches in terms of the objectives it is pursuing. Also, the selected method of use herein is a descriptive-analytical one. The data finding method was carried out based on two methods. First of all, field studies were conducted by attending and observing Chaharbagh School-Mosque and photos were directly taken by the authors thereof; the second method, constituting an increasingly higher share of the study, is library research. To do library research, there is made use of various sources such as the books, articles, dissertations, research proposals as well as authentic information sites and databases. Content analysis has been used to elaborate the doctrine functioning premises of the edifice's epigraphs as well as to extract the primary messages and the super-concepts residing therein. Based on the theory proposed by Bryce Allen regarding this approach, "content analysis is a research technique defined in line with the organized and objective description and elucidation of the contents of communication with the ultimate goal of data interpretations (Bryce Allen, 1990: 251-261).

¹ Every single sentence in the holy Quran

² Eloquent cautionary statements made by the Imams and the great Elders, the singular form of which is Hadith

Diagram (1): the general structure of the study



(Source: the authors)

Chaharbagh School-Mosque In brief:

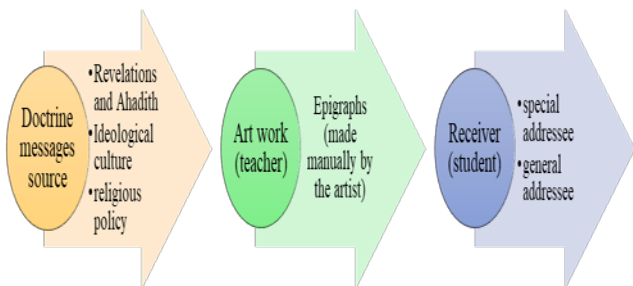
As the most important monument in Madarshah urban complex, Chahar Bagh School-Mosque is located somewhere between Chahar Bagh Avenue and Abbasi Hotel (caravanserai). The complex was built by the order of Soltan Hossein, a Safavid king, in 1116-1126 A.H. to serve as a theological and clerical school to train the religious students (Mousavi Fraidani, 1999:107). This educational entity has been also called Chahar Bagh, Sultani, and Madarshah. Roger Savory (1993:165) believes Chahar Bagh School is the most magnificent building in Isfahan within the period of successors of Shāh Abbās I of Persia. (Professor Nasr, 1980:64) introduced the monument as a masterpiece of Islamic art. Great tourists such as Dieulafoy, Gobineau and Flandern described the complex as a pleasant, charming and mysterious place (Riyahi, 2006:201).

The Doctrine Function of Chaharbagh School-Mosque Epigraphs:

Education and upbringing and Islamic sciences have always been intertwined and subtly bound with the principles of Islam, Ahadith and, more importantly, the spirit of the Holy Quran. Also, Islamic art, due to its being relevant to sacred affairs and, consequently, to perfection, educates and trains the human spirit in its most subtle and most perfect sense (Nasr and Avini, 1994, 2-3). As one of the most unique Islamic arts, calligraphy, a non-pictorial element, acquired a prestigious position, from the early centuries of its emergence, in line with serving the transfer of eminent concepts and denotation of Islam's spiritual message in an aesthetic form in every single art, especially in architectural decorations (Zomarshidi, 2012, 102). Such a doctrine function is in a gigantic relationship with the ethical mission of the epigraphs and it is highly correlated with the teachings provided to the users (addressees) and the society. Maybe, the doctrine aspect can be realized as

the most original function of Chaharbagh School-Mosque epigraphs prone to examination from two directions: the first area encompasses the doctrine concepts and themes which emphasize on the necessity of knowledge and learning sciences and their related ethical issues and this aspect is well-observed in various spaces in the format of the Holy Quran's Ayat, Ahadith and prayers among which are the Ahadith quoted from the great Islam's apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) who states that "surely, the scientists are the inheritors of the prophets"; and in another saying he addresses Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in saying "O, Ali, the knowledgeable man's sleep is better than prayers by the pious man. Lo, Ali, two Rak'at of prayer fulfilled by a learned man is equal to a thousand Rak'at fulfilled by a pious person"; and, the second area, which is much more important and extensive, covers the religious-ideological doctrine messages.

Diagram (2): Elaboration of the doctrine messages reflection trend



(Source: the authors)

Epigraphs' Contents Typology:

Islamic, and particularly Safavid, era inscriptions, setting aside their apparent aesthetic aspects, embrace concepts which are applied to homogenize the various kinds of Islamic buildings. The contents used in Chaharbagh School-Mosque inscriptions are generally implemented in the format of holy Quran's Ayat, Ahadith and Narrations by the Immaculate Imams and the literary pros and poems of a Persian or Arabic background all of which, in a general and coherent categorization, can be observed in table (1).

³ A *rakat*, or *rak'ah* (Arabic: رَكْعَة *rak'ah*, plural: رَكَعَات *raka'āt*), consists of the prescribed movements and words followed by Muslims while offering prayers to God.

Table 1: Typology of Chaharbagh School Mosque's epigraph in Isfahan

General typology and classification of the contents reflected in the epigraphs	
Holy Quran's Ayat	This set of contents most often includes small surah in the Holy Quran such as Al-Qadr and Al-Ikhlâs. Of course, there are cases that instances of the holy Quran's Ayat have been applied as documents, for emphasizing on a single content, for example Sura Al-Baqarah (Ayat 137&144, Surah Al-Asra (ayat 78-82), Surah Noor (Aya 35), Surah Al-Ahzab (Aya, 56) and Surah Ma'edah (Aya, 55)
Ahadith and Narrations and Admirations of the Immaculate Imams	This set of the contents which are of a more frequent use in respect to the holy Quran's contents have been applied in various dimensions and qualities on different surfaces of the edifice and they include short and long Ahadith with variegated themes and contents and also a wide array of the immaculate Imams' admiration and praises. An important part of this set is comprised of contents which are reflective of the prophetic teachings and the great Islam apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards)'s countenance. The aforementioned contents are atop of the list in terms of quality and quantity.
Literary prose and poems	According to the Safavid era policies and the foundations of art, there has been tendencies towards Persian poetry and texts in expressing the doctrines and concepts deliverable in architectural buildings' inscriptions. One of the best specimens of such type of texts application can be observed in Chaharbagh edifice, as the last prominent building constructed in Safavid era, and they are most often written in Nasta'aliq calligraphy style and bearing contents of praising and admiring the Immaculate Imams and compliments and extolments about the sponsor of the edifice, King Sultan Hussein.

(Source: the authors)

Emphasizing on the inscriptions the contents of which are in close and direct relationship with the doctrine function and the concepts of this area, we deal with the systematic extraction and categorization of the concepts and doctrine messages conveyed by such epigraphs in the next section.

Analyzing and Classifying the Epigraphs' Contents and Messages based on their Doctrine Function:

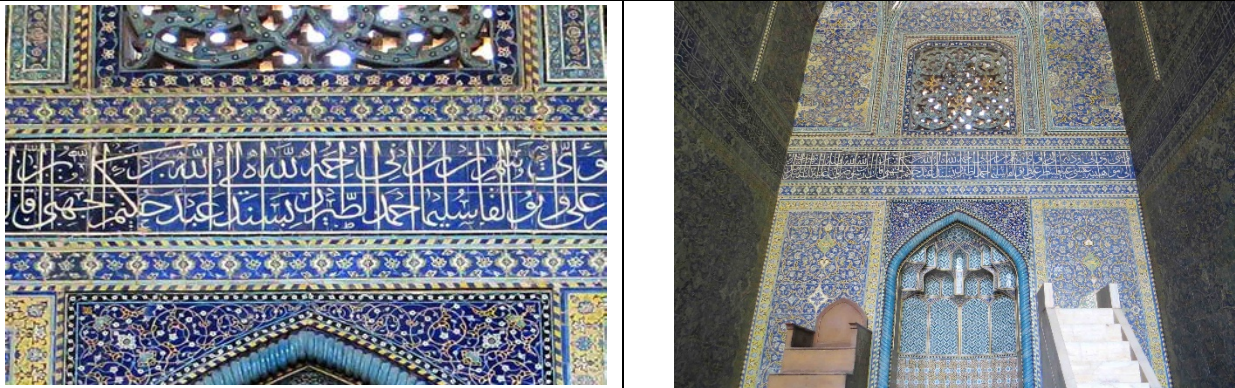
According to the extensiveness and the diversity of the structure and themes of Chaharbagh School-Mosque inscriptions, as a treasury of the Islamic-Iranian epigraphy, the following section provides a selection of these inscriptions in a dual classification. The classification is based on the extent to which the contents and the messages are associated with the doctrine literature area.

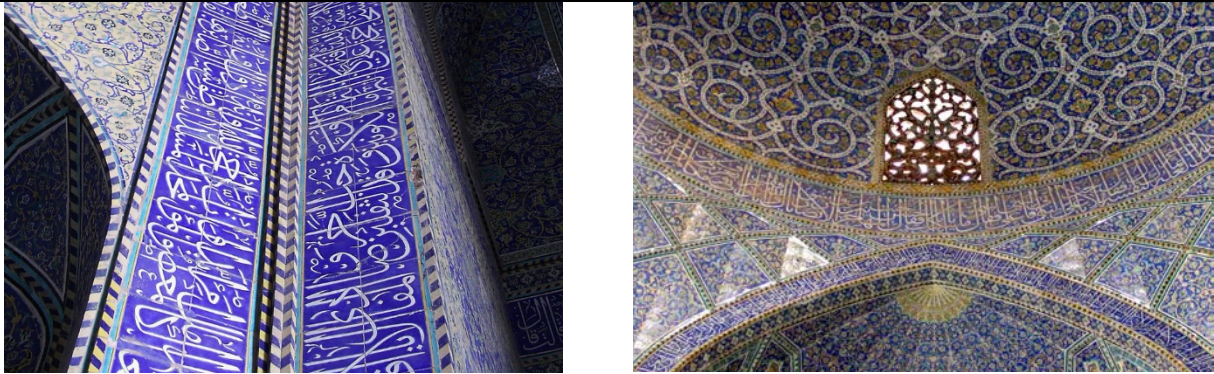

2. The Survey of the Inscriptions Bearing Religious-Ideological Doctrine Contents:

As it was asserted above, the inscriptions are classified based on the type of the issued doctrine message's relevance to the doctrine use and the themes, messages and the super-concepts existent therein have been extracted, accordingly. Based on this, the first group of the inscriptions includes the epigraphs the doctrine contents of which are of religious-ideological type. These inscriptions, accounting for a larger quantity of the epigraphs in respect to the other inscriptions, have been demonstrated in the format of variegated apparent structure of tile works and on the bedding of different calligraphy lines such as Thuluth, Kufic and Nasta'aliq. In terms of their contents and themes, the inscriptions cover a wide spectrum of religious and ideological messages presented based on the religious and political culture governing King Sultan Hussein Safavi era and through making use of Holy Quran's Ayat and authentic Hadith sources.

Table 2: Classification and analysis of the components in inscriptions indicative of religious-ideological doctrine contents

Q	Placement	Inscription text and theme
1	On the northwestern stretch of the area beneath the dome	(Honarfar, 1972: 698) Text translation: "ornament your gatherings with remembering the name of His Highness Ali (peace be upon him), if a population could have been formed centering about real interest in his highness, the God would have not created the fire (the hell)". Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 1

This is of religious-ideological messages type regarding Shiite religion in Safavid era and it points to the eminent position of His Highness Ali (peace be upon him) as the preemptor of the Muslims and, also, his unprecedented excellence.		
2	Above the adytum and tribune	<p style="text-align: right;">(Honarfar, 1972: 699-700)</p> <p>part of the text translation: Bayhaghi, in his book, quotes great Islam's apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) who ordered that "he who wishes to bear witness to Noah's piety and Ibrahim's patience and the magnificence and solemnity of Moses and the worships of Messiah (peace be upon them), so, should look at Ali (peace be upon him)". Also, it is stated in another narration that the God's prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered "on the night of ascension I reached to the peak of ultimacy. It was revealed to me about Ali (peace be upon him) that he is the Imam of the devotees and the leader of the white faces in the blissful heaven". Also, the Islam Apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered that "if the people knew when Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was entitled to the epithet of Amir Al-Mu'emenin, they would never deny his excellence and superiority".</p>
Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 2		
The is a religious-ideological message about the Shiites' religious policy based on righteous imamate of Ali (peace be upon him) and it points to the excellence and the magnificence of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) who is the sum total of all the good characteristics that can be enumerated for the prophets and the other imams in such a manner that all the single eminent and prominent features of the previous Imams and prophets are summarized in Imam Ali (peace be upon him) as the righteous Imam. Also, the inscription's content points to the particular position of His Highness as the mirror of the God and the reflection of the good divine attributes.		
		
3	Above the southwestern stretch and beneath the dome	<p style="text-align: right;">(Honarfar, 1972: 698)</p> <p>Text translation: refers to a very important Hadith from the Prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) known as the famous Thaqaalayn hadith.</p>
Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 3		
It points to the special position of the immaculate imams, especially his highness Ali (peace upon him) as the valuable heir (successor) and rescuer of his highness Apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards).		
4	Above the southeastern stretch and below the dome	<p style="text-align: right;">(Honarfar, 1972: 698)</p> <p>Text translation: and he also ordered "O, Ali, to me, you are like Aaron to Moses (with the difference that), there will be no prophet after me". And, also, he ordered "my people of the house are like Noah's ship, he who gets onboard, will be saved and he who disobeys, will be drown".</p>
Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 4		
The famous Thaqaalayn Hadith, expressed in the above inscription, is continued within a short distance, along with an Arabic letter indicating "also", with a splendid hadith describing the great figure of his highness Ali (peace be upon him) in such a manner that Imam Ali (peace be upon him), as the prophet's member of family, is vividly addressed by the prophet.		

	
5	<div><div>Above the northeastern stretch and underneath the dome</div><div>(Honarfar, 1972: 698)</div><div>Text translation: and, also, he ordered “adoring Ali (peace be upon him), the son of Abu Taleb, is a good deed that is never harmed by any sin and hating Ali (peace be upon him) is a sin which does not benefit from any worship”, and, also, he ordered “Ali is the most-selected of the mankind, so, he who denies has become a Kaffir”.</div></div>
Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 5	
This hadith which has been put forth, serially, to complete the three abovementioned Ahadith pertains to the importance of feeling love for his highness Ali (peace be upon him), as the savior, and the harsh consequences of enmity towards his highness and, in the ending part, it calls Kaffirs the ones who deny the fact that his highness Ali (peace be upon him) is the best in the whole creation.	
6	<div><div>Minaret</div><div>Honarfar, 1972: 699-700)</div><div>Text translation: the God’s apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered that “Ali is mine and I am Ali’s, he is the Imam of every believer after me”. The God’s apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered “Ali and I are of a single light”.</div></div>
Doctrine concept and message (religious-ideological) 6	
A vivid emphasis on the eminent position and the excellences of his highness Ali (peace be upon him) as the closest individual to his highness the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) and, also, as the guardian and the imam of all Muslims.	
	

(Source: the authors)

Based on the content analysis and classification performed within the above table, the various religious-ideological messages are conveyed to the addressees via these epigraphs which are served to act as important messengers during the course of history and in the contemporary era, as well. Among the most important of these messages, in complete proportion to the religious policy of Safavid era, and especially to the intensification of Shiism mindset in the time of the last governor of this era to wit king Sultan

Hussein, is the emphasis on the excellences and the particular position of His Highness Amir Al-Mu’menin Ali (peace be upon him) as well as his imamate and guardianship rank. This important subject matter has been applied in various points on the edifice taking the form of different Hadith and narrations from the magnificent Imams, particularly the great prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) and it has outperformed, both quantitatively and



qualitatively, the other contents and messages. It is worth mentioning that, according to the significance of these Ahadith and Quran-driven texts, their complete texts along with similar Ahadith and Ayat are available in authentic Shiite Hadith texts, such as “Usul-e-Kafi, volume 1, and “Man La Yahzarahu Al-Faqih, volume 4.


2. The Survey of the Inscriptions Bearing Specific Doctrine Contents regarding Knowledge and Science-Learning:

The second set of the epigraphs, which are somewhat of more interest than the first set to the present article, are the ones the contents and the doctrine messages of which are in close relationship with the discussions on knowledge and learning sciences as well as didactic literature. The

forementioned inscriptions, though not enjoying the quantity and the multiplicity of the first set of the epigraphs, are of a prominent position because besides being placed in the golden points on the building such as the exterior panorama and the interior view of the porches, are considerably in proportion and harmony with the building’s scientific-worship use and doctrine functioning of the inscriptions. The primary source of these contents is the Holy Quran’s texts and Ahadith which are among the most authentic and most outstanding Ahadith in Shiite and Sunni’s texts based on the researches carried out by the authors of the current article. The following table deals with the survey of the epigraphs and the analysis of their contents in line with the extraction of the super-concepts and primary messages.

Table 3: classification and analysis of the contents of inscriptions bearing doctrine denotations regarding knowledge and science-learning

Row	Placement	Inscription text and theme
1	1- entrance gate façade	<p>Inscription text: the famous hadith “انا مدينة العلم و على بابها”, meaning “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its door” (Honarfar, 1972).</p> <p>In this Hadith, which is of a great importance according to the scientific-worship use of the edifice, the subtle relationship between the personality of the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) and science learning area in such a manner that this magnificent figure introduces himself as the city of knowledge and a treasury of the sciences. Another point is the clear-cut relationship between his highness Ali (peace be upon him) and the science-learning area which is clearly perceived based on the Ahadith quoted from the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) as well as the precious utterances by he, himself in Nahj Al-Balagha. Also, it is indicative of the close relationship between these two unprecedented figures</p>
	2- the metal inscription on the priceless entrance gate	
	3- above the entrance gate to the hall	
	4- inside the northern porch	
Doctrine concept and message (the necessity of knowledge and learning science) 1		
<p>This short but important text which is of particular position in Iranian-Islamic epigraphy, especially in Safavid era, has been installed on four golden positions of the building with various structures according to the importance of the content. And, the most important message extracted from it is the necessity of knowledge and science-learning as well as the deep ties between the most important figures of Islam and Shiite religion with this field.</p>		
<div></div>		
2	Exterior panorama of the porch	<p>(Honarfar, 1972: 712)</p> <p>part of the text translation: the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) has been quoted to have ordered “whoever who sets out on a path and looks for Ali, the God will open a path for him towards the heaven (s/he will be proceeded to the heaven from that path); and, surely, the angles, for the sake of his contentment, stretch out their wings for the science-seekers and everyone, on the skies and earth, even the fish in the sea, ask for the science-seeker’s absolution and the superiority of the scholar over the pious is like the superiority of</p>

		the moon to the other stars, and that be on a night when the moon is full” (Kolayni, 1991). Also, his highness (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered that “seeking for knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim man and woman” (Majlesi, 1984). “Surely, the scientists are the heirs of the prophets and it is evident that the prophets have not left behind a single dinar or Dirham, so he who acquires knowledge, has earned himself a great share” (Kolayni, 1991).
Doctrine concept and message (the necessity of knowledge and learning science) 2		
The content of this long inscription, placed on two localities on the edifice, along with the citation of the instances and putting forth examples, is reflective of the vivid emphasis on the importance and the necessity of the knowledge and science-learning and in a clear-cut utterance it expresses the superiority of the scholar over pious in an exemplary and case-specific format. Also, an important part of this message and content introduces knowledge and science as the most significant heritage left from the immaculate imams which is accurately assertive of the necessity to benefit from their teachings.		
3	The exterior view of the southern porch	<p>(Honarfar, 1972: 707-708)</p> <p>part of the text translation: the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered Ali (peace be upon him), son of Abu Taleb, “O, Ali, scholar’s sleep is better than worshipping by a pious. Lo, Ali, the two Rak’at fulfilled by a scholar is worth a thousand Rak’at fulfilled by a pious person” (Sadugh, 2007).</p> <p>It is narrated from Hafas Ben Ghiyas that “Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) ordered that he who learns a science for the sake of God and puts it into practical use and teaches the others, s/he will be called magnificent in the kingdom of heaven and they would say that s/he learnt for the sake of God, performed for the sake of God and taught for the sake of God” (Kolayni, 1991).</p>
Doctrine concept and message (the necessity of knowledge and learning science) 3		
According to the importance of science and scholars and the outstanding position of this group in respect to the individuals who only get involved in worships, the message conveyed by this inscription, outsourced from the authentic Hadith, is an utterance exemplarily and case-specifically declarative of the superiority of and priority given to the scholars in contrast to the pious-only ones.		
		
4	The interior panorama of the eastern porch	<p>(Honarfar, 1972: 715)</p> <p>part of the text translation: because in the wise Holy Quran the knowledge-learning and the wayfaring of the brilliant path of God has been encouraged and also in the context of the Ahdith narrated from the immaculate imams (peace be upon them) the encouragement and stimulation have been emphasized and the invincible God orders that “so, why a group of that clan try not to migrate to find awareness in religion and when they returned they warned their tribe so as to, maybe, deter them from depravities”.</p> <p>And the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) ordered “knowledge-seeking is obligatory for every Muslim, beware that the God, surely, likes the cravers of knowledge [science-learners]” (Kolayni, 1991, “Al-Hayat”, 1990: 39).</p>
Doctrine concept and message (the necessity of knowledge and learning science) 4		

Benefiting from the holy Quran's Ayat and teachings along with the doctrines taught in Ahadith in line with the strengthening of the content of the doctrine message are among the important points of the epigraph which provides for a multiple as much emphasis on the importance of acquisition and learning of science and getting to the position of a qualified scholar.		
5	The exterior view of the southern porch	<p>(Honarfar, 1972: 707-708)</p> <p>part of the text translation: ... and it is narrated from Mo'aviyeh, the son of Wahab, who said "I hear Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) ordering that seek for knowledge and, concomitantly, decorate yourselves with patience and dignity and be humble to your students and be modest to your master and do not be of the imperious scholars type because your vain behavior wastes your right" (Ibid). It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) that "Imam Ali (peace be upon him) used to order that it is one of the scholars' rights not to be questioned so much and when you arrive at a scholar and see a group of people before him, salute everyone and hail in special words at the master; and, sit in front of him and do not point fingers at him and avoid verbosity. The scholar is like a palm tree, you should wait for an opportunity to get something from him and the reward promised to a scholar is more than the gifts preserved for the fasting wakeful individual and even than the one who performs jihad on the path of God" (Ibid).</p>
Doctrine concept and message (the necessity of knowledge and learning science) 5		
The content and the super-concept conveyed by this inscription which, in spite of pointing to the area of knowledge and science learning and despite its similarity to the abovementioned Ahadith's themes, is expressive of a delicate distinction, targets the ethics of science-learning in such a manner that in this authentic Hadith, the type of ethical and proper relationships between the instructor and the student has been beautifully depicted and the awareness of such principles can, definitely, open new venues to the knowledge-seekers.		

(Source: the authors)

One of the most important results obtained from the classification and analysis of the science-learning inscriptions installed on this edifice is the substantiated referral to the considerable proportions and appropriateness of the contents and structure of these epigraphs with their primary use case, placement locality and the main use-case of Chaharbagh School-Mosque. It is worth mentioning that each of the concepts proposed in the epigraphs covers a wide spectrum of hadith sources and Islamic teachings, especially Shiite doctrine and, as an example, the five authentic Ahadith embedded in the epigraphs include a hadith from the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards), a hadith from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and three Ahadith from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) so as to provide a more deeper insight of the knowledge and science learning realm and the complete text of these excerpts can be found in famous Shiite's hadith books to wit "Usul-e-Kafi, volume 1, and "Man La Yahzarahu Al-Faqih", volume 4.

Conclusion:

Chaharbagh School-Mosque, as one of the most outstanding examples of religious edifices in Safavid era and founded by direct sponsorship of King Sultan Hussein, showcases its considerable epigraphs. The aforementioned inscriptions, taking advantage of various types of Kufic (Banai and Ma'agheli), Thuluth and Nasta'aligh, calligraphy are depictions of the holy Quran Ayat, narrations, Ahadith and the exalted names of the God and

the other religious contents the fundamental premises of which are national beliefs, prevalent Shiite religious mindsets governing the then era that have, altogether, caused the accentuation of the content aspect of the inscriptions along with their aesthetic aspects. Based on the studies carried out in the format of the current research paper and according to the great extensiveness and high diversity of Chaharbagh edifice's epigraphs implemented by making use of a wide spectrum of techniques and less frequently seen diversity of the calligraphies in the various sections of the building, the variegation of the inscriptions' contents and themes and their different functions have doubled the sacrosanctity aspect of the edifice. One of the most important functions of these inscriptions, of a considerable proportion to the building's use and objective, is the highly important doctrine function which has been widely mirrored in the epigraphs' contents installed in this building and, thus, it is necessary to direct particular attention to the investigation and recognition of the epigraph's contents. Generally, the contents applied on the inscriptions in Chaharbagh edifice can be categorized into three sets, namely the Holy Quran's Ayat, Ahadith and the Persian narrations and poems; in addition, according to the approach governing the current research paper and the identification of the study population of these inscriptions, it has to be pointed out that the doctrine concepts and messages are more concentrated on the Holy Quran's Ayat and Ahadith. In terms of the extent to which the contents and the themes are relevant, the aforementioned inscriptions were investigated within two sets, namely the

doctrine religious-ideological contents (general) and the doctrine contents belonging to the knowledge and science-learning field (specific). It is worth mentioning that a content analysis method was applied to carry out a systematic and scientific recognition of the messages and the contents. Based on this, the first set are the epigraphs which, mostly, embrace the religious issues including the pillars of the religion, hailing on Muhammad (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) and other issues of the like. It is worth mentioning that the most important outstanding theme in the studied samples, in this set, is the utterances expressing the eminent position and the personality excellence of His Highness Ali (peace be upon him), as the Shiite's first Imam. This current theme is an example and specimen of the Shiite art and the religious policy governing the Safavid era society; but, the second set of the themes in the studied inscriptions, pertaining, definitively, to the knowledge and science-learning, has been of a more importance to the current research paper. Among the most important messages and most outstanding super-concepts, in between the sample contents of this latter group, is the emphasis on the significance of knowledge, the superiority of scholars to the pious individuals, science-learning ethics, the necessity to learn sciences and encouraging it all of which were dealt with in the format of tables, presented above, accompanied by the images exhibiting the locations where these inscriptions have been installed. Another considerable point, besides the subtle concepts, pertaining to the knowledge and science-learning signified by these epigraphs, is the considerable proportion between the placement location and the way the inscriptions, bearing the aforesaid concepts, are installed in such a manner that according to the importance of these inscriptions and their conformation with the general mission of the edifice, golden points such as the porches' exterior views, teaching spaces and the entrance gates have been selected for the installation of them. In the end, a general conclusion can be made that Chaharbagh School-Mosque, as one of the most important edifices from Safavid Era, besides having a huge structure and magnificent architectural ornamentations, has been endowed with valuable epigraphic inscriptions that have transcended beyond the appearance beauty and reached to content richness. Besides diverse and valuable concepts, these inscriptions demonstrate outstanding contents regarding knowledge and science-learning. According to the vastness of this area and the scarcity of present article's space, the other functions of these inscriptions can be a topic for further future research.

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