

Study of the Relationship between Hakim MullaSadra's Philosophy and Urban Planning

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ABSTRACT

Iran's Islamic urban planning is rooted in a rich culture possessing valuable effects which present the great civilization of Iran in line with history. A deep study in cities will uncover some authenticities based on which valuable concepts and high principles are rooted such as; recognition of Iran's architecture specifically Iran's Islamic architecture, creativity is a part of human existence as man is creature of God and has His characteristics from any perspective although in a more lower level. Man loves creativity, as far as he finds himself departed from this universe. He probes into his demands in his art of creativity where he cannot find them in the universe, however construction of buildings and cities are among this creativities. In this article, the Relationship between Hakim MullaSadra's Philosophy and Urban Planning is studies from different perspectives.

KEYWORDS

Philosophy of MullaSadra, Urban Planning, Man, Nature

INTRODUCTION

Man and Nature's relationship has faced many fluctuations in history. In other words, we couldn't find a clear answer to this question in history. How is the relationship between man and his surrounding world? Which of these two –man or nature- play more important role in flowing of the river of life? On which principles were the relationship of man and nature (environment) in ancient time established? And which changes this relationship has been faced to in modern era? In ancient time, in both old eastern and new western civilizations, there seemed to be a kind of unity and harmony between man and his surrounding nature. In the oldest book of Indians - "Upanishads" – there is a word "ishabash", meaning "everything is God". But main meaning of this word I that Indians of ancient time believed in live and holy nature of all the world's objects and surrounding nature, accordingly, our nature and environment were of high value in our life, where in case of damage of any part of them were believed as a damage to the man's existence and general order of universe. Because their main argument was over what are the things the nature is constructed with. Hakim MullaSadra can be known as the last theologian who has introduced the holy Quran as one of the most important resources of recognition and knowledge and also refers to it in case of proving his ideology. Sadra, in clarification of Quran's verses and concepts,

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launches notable arguments in philosophical, illuminated, and mystic trend passing by the thoughts and beliefs of philosophers of Quran and mysticism even. In his interpretive method, Sadra believes to uncover the hidden meaning while protecting the appearance. Based on this, appearance is the bridge between man and the discovering of the authenticity of phenomena, where for reaching the authenticity man should pass the appearance. Stocking in that and getting involved with cover and appearance means to be avoided from high meanings which are hidden on the other side of appearance. Urban planning and construction can be put in such an equation. Looking to the cover of the city, the inside can be recognized. The appearance shows the culture, type of architecture and attitudes of the people there. With a little reflection and thinking we can see the effects of man's thoughts on creation of architecture and urban pieces of arts.

- **Biography of Sadr ad-Din Muhammad Shirazi**

Şadr ad-Din MuḥammadShirazi, also called MullaSadra (c. 1571/2 – 1640) is an Iranian Shia Islamic philosopher, theologian born in Shiraz. His father, Ibrahim bin YahyaGhavami, being a minister in SafavidDinesty, did his best for growing up his only son MullaSadra. MullaSadra's life can be studied in 3 periods:

- 1- Studentship, attending at argument and study sessions to probe into the old books and also verdicts of Shiraz and Isfahan's judges. In this period he had studied initiation and illumination philosophy.
- 2- Period of self-purification, mortification, and revelation in Kahak village (near Qom) that finally led to revelation of divine authenticities and knowledge.
- 3- Period of compilation and teaching in Shiraz in a school established by Allah-Verdi Khan, governor of Fars. He compiled almost all his works in this period. He opened a new window to divine wisdom and Islamic philosophy. Here within, he challenged the philosophy of his preceding philosophers and changed basic principles of this skill, establishing divine wisdom that is in fact the real philosophy. He continued his life teaching and compiling books in Shiraz in this period and visited Mecca for seven times on his feet.

Professors: ShaykhBaha al-din al-Amili also called ShaykhBahai, Mirdamad, Sayyed Mir AbulqasimFendereski, philosopher, poet and mystic of the Safavid era.

Students: MullaSadra trained many students among whom we can name two most famous ones: Mulla Mohsen FayzKashani, MullaAbd al-RazaghLahiji, both of them were his son in law also.

Works: Al-Hikma al-muta‘aliya fi-l-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a, al-Tafsir (A commentary upon the Qur'an), Sharh al-hidayah, al-Mabda‘ wa'l-ma‘ad, al-Shawahid al-rububiyah, Sharh-i Shafa, Ajwibah al-masa'il,

MullaSadra's character has many dimensions and his life is also adventurous. Unlike other philosophers, he is not a mere philosopher and it does not suffice him even if we add the title of mystic or so to his titles.

- **School of Isfahan**

The Isfahan school is a symbol of unity of universe and paradise as well. Intellectual philosophy of MullaSadra and also Shia codes governing in Safavid era believing in the other world has grew up in school of Isfahan emphasizing at "existence of God is the only real and authentic existence". Urban planning arose from Sadrayi School of thought which itself is illustrated in school of Isfahan, despite variety in form, is speaking of a meaning in which elements and whole are based on a common concept. In architecture elements, accordingly, there is an analogy in shape of role of discipline and repetition, and role of nature and garden, in other words, unity in idea of creation of a society trying at presenting paradise where school of Isfahan and Sadrayi as well is performed.

Isfahan style resulted in creation of city-power, city-market, city-capital, city-porch, city-region balance in due to creation of utopia of Safavid era. The influential character in architecture and urban planning of Isfahan School is ShaykhBahai and in Philosophy and Theology are Mir Emad, Mir Fendereski, Mulla Mohsen FayzKashani, Majlessi 2nd, and MullaSadra. ShaykhBahai's great work was to show the unreliability of other sciences in comparison to mysticism, while he was a master all those sciences, emphasizing the priority of witnessing to discursive knowledge. His works were a balance between physical and esoteric sciences. In School of Isfahan, city is integrated in surrounding environment and so is in complete accordance to the surrounding nature, also in coexistence and multilateral unity with the surrounding villages. Ideology based on mystic concepts hires spatial hierarchy from largest to smallest physical scale and tries to show the unifying principle of universe in each scale.

School of Isfahan is targeting at proving a principle based on which the universe is established; the principle of balance, spatial and physical balance and the harmony of the elements in representation of a concept. In the School of Isfahan, instead of macro-scales, humane atmosphere is proposed, and man passes this atmosphere without any fear of the scale. According to the theory of Unity of Existence, every spot in urban planning and architecture of School of Isfahan is a window to pass from the existing to the hidden. Instead of creating hegemonic buildings, School of Isfahan creates fully people-oriented works and makes them ever-remembering to the history. School of Isfahan is shaped with four earthly materials including water, soil, plant,

and air in a holy meaning (holy order) and tries to elaborate that the most reliable and existing is the content and nature of the subject.

- **Iranian Garden and Iranian Artist**

Artistic creativity of man and linkage of art to metaphysics from the perspective of MullaSadra:

There are two main questions on man's artistic creativity that MullaSadra's answer to them can lead us to find our expected answers regarding arts generally and Iranian gardens particularly:

A- Basically, why man is creative and can create artistic works?

B- Man looks for an answer when he faces a question. Which question he answers is his art, and, which demand man wants to feed that ends to creation of artistic works?

We can find the required answers to these two questions applying MullaSadra's viewpoints:

Art is the human's existing manner, and man is artist as he is the representative of the adjectives like creative, inventor, beautiful, beauty-lover, powerful, scientist ..., and all these are given by God not chosen by man. Therefore these adjectives or symbols are of priority in regard to the artist himself while his talents are performed.

MullaSadra knows creation as an artistic verb of God, and knows man and the universe the artistic works of Him. In fact, he uplifts art beyond man, meanwhile represents it as a manner of man's existence. He declares real art as to be in the shadow of divine art.

MullaSadra exemplifies man to the God in any aspect, and believes that the belongings of God and Man prove this. God has created man in a way to possess powers like creativeness, perception, and so, alike Him. Concept of perception means the world of beings in which aspects are performed without needing any materials to perform it. In such a world, willing is already the creation. MullaSadra believes that the world of imagination is of perceptive identity.

As for the second question, MullaSadra points out the link between art and metaphysics. Philosophy of art is nothing rather the incapability of nature in meeting the needs of man. Man is not satisfied of whatever he is. Being merely with nature, man feels lack of things and this leads him toward compensation of this condition.

“Alienation means that man (either religious or not) finds himself separated from nature and so feels lack in everything, therefore he feels nervous and stressful. This will result in two senses: hatred from one side and love from the other, meaning escape from the existing world to the world of ideals”. That is why man is representing his ambitions through art. He sings, builds, and authors the ambitions....

- **Architecture, Love, Philosophy**

Theoretical principles are a complex of different intellectual approaches that simultaneously studies and investigate these thoughts and criticizes their various artistic effects. These artistic approaches face changes, completion and decadence and also challenge to their preceding ones in course of history.

“Architecture is like a triangle whose second and third angles are love and philosophy, and all other concepts of life are integrated to these two concepts while creating an architectural work”.

Architecture is of vast territory including not only materials but also valuable concepts that for knowing these concepts we have no way than to realize philosophy and identity of love in art. For realization of architectural works, senses do not suffice but play a simple role, however in realization of art both mental and heart realizations are needed.

This heart and mental realization results in deep realization of concepts where can present only and only in works of art, which this is presented in art specifically in architecture. Greatness of this realization is in unconscious attraction of depth of conscience. As the spirit of infatuation is in all aspects of creation of universe, architect also conveys this spirit in creation of his artistic work. Although this spirit is perceived by the audience and the level of this perception depends on his unspiritual sublimity which leads into delight and fascination. Two fundamental dimensions of philosophy are the essence of a phenomenon and the methodology of identification of that phenomenon. As Brian Maggy states in History of Philosophy "the main issue of history of philosophy is a change in these two subjects and all subordinate subjects arose from through centuries.

In other words philosophy is the realm of origin.

Regarding the genesis of human life in primitive caves and shelters and their gradual perfection throughout history, leads us to the fact that architecture and philosophy have been two inseparable issues in human perfection. Philosophy itself is of high importance because of the relationship it has with recognition and thought; and through a link with architecture which receives its existence from creation, displays a horizon of intellectual and practical understanding before human's eyes. Definitely, no artistic and architectural work has appeared through history of human life, unless inspired by a philosophical background describing and confirming the necessity of

that work. Meanwhile the works appeared out of a sudden and those made by an obligation are taken separately into account, owing to the fact that they cannot be considered as artistic work, for instance lots of different residences having been spread like weeds without embodying architectural spirit and identity affecting directly on urbanization. The relationship between architecture and philosophy of a work is a bilateral confrontation in which the structure of an architectural work is defined.

But what is architectural philosophy? Architectural philosophy includes all unspiritual and fundamental concepts of architecture's mind formed in parallel with physical and formal characteristics in a building which answer all original questions about creation and criticism of building. In other words, architecture includes not only the visual aspects of what perceived, but also geometrical shapes and artistic proportions and flexible forms, even contradictory movement of elements contains a pure message from artist's thought and insight, even his contemporary people's obsession which is mysteriously included in a piece of work which inspires the creator's internal voice to the audience in form of architecture. The mission of philosophy is trying to exhibit artist's intellectual and artistic secrets and to help the audience in finding the creator's message and his presence and motive in creating a piece of art.

But what is love's unspiritual role in explanation of philosophical architecture?

- According to theoretical basics, the essence of art is a wonder created in audience's mind inviting him to worship.
- Sufis believe the universe has been based upon love, and all Endeavour and enthusiasm in creation from beginning to the end is for love. So they hold real perfection should be searched in love.
- As Will Durant says in History of Philosophy "our love is expanded from people to the things, and beautifies the earth we step on and leads in a fascination for Creator of art.
- The natural (internal) power of love inspires delight in artist.
- One who speaks about love is Aritudomos, in his opinion nobody will do much without love. The only factor which inspires in man the power and motive to create a superhuman artistic work is love.
- Bertrand Russell also believes love gives the spirit greatness and dignity, in a way that all masterpieces were born by love.

- **Islamic City in Quran's view**

God has provided guidance in Quran for all human problems in life. Among them the characteristics of an Islamic city is included in terms of architecture and urbanization. One of the key intellectual, philosophical, artistic and productive findings of human culture and society is "city" which enjoys relative durability in one hand, and the emergence of beliefs and cultural values on the other hand and also affects human behavior. City indicates the identity of society and history and regulates the relationship between masses in the society.

- **Nature and natural elements**

Quranic instructions consider the natural elements as signs of God's Power and Knowledge, and medium of recognizing principles like monotheism and the resurrection. These all indicate the necessity of a close and constant relationship between man and nature to use these divine verses and think about them.

Below some of verses about natural elements and their impact in man's physical and spiritual life have been mentioned.

- **Light**

Light is a phenomenon introduced in Quranic instructions as a sign of sublime entity and great and beautiful concepts; such as:

- God: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.
- Prophet Muhammad: O people of the Book! There hath come to you our Messenger, revealing to you much that ye used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary). There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book. (15)
- Quran: Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger, and in the light which we have sent down. And Allah is aware of the things you do (8)
- Guidance and Faith: Allah is the Protecting Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein. (257)
- Sight: The blind man is not equal with the seer; (19) Nor is darkness (tantamount to) light; (20)

Therefore, it should be considered that urban spaces could suitably utilize the sunlight, and secondly draw people's attention to the light; because for example if a person placed in a very bright space in a way that the light sources are not obvious, not even a window exists in that space, he will not notice the light. So it could be possible to constantly draw people's attention to the light by utilizing different levels

of brightness and angles of reflecting light. Absence of light is shadow which implicitly contains sublime concepts in itself.

▪ **Wind**

Wind (air) in addition to the role it has in the life of many creatures on earth, plays a significant role in regulation of weather conditions (movement of clouds), moving pollution, plant fertilization, annunciation of divine mercy, celestial sign and also the rage of God.

Some of the verses describing these characteristics are as follows:

- And we send the winds fertilizing, and cause water to descend from the sky, and give it you drink. It is not you who are the holders of the store thereof. (22)
- And He it is Who sends the winds, glad tidings heralding His mercy, and We send down purifying water from the sky, (48)
- And also in Aãd, when we sent the fatal wind against them. (41)

Therefore in urbanization the wind direction and its intensity should be taken into account in different days. Moreover, how the buildings are established and located, and how high they are built and location of short and high buildings in different area of the city should be carefully assessed along with the direction of passages and proportions between open and constructed spaces. As stated in Quran: We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? (30)

This verse has great implicit significance in itself. Such as:

Heaven: And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow; as often as they are regaled with food of the fruit thereof, they say: this is what was given us aforetime; and it is given to them in resemblance. There for them are pure companions; there forever they abide. (25)

Life: And in the alternation of night and day and the provision that Allah sends down from the sky and therewith revives the earth after it is dead, and the turning about of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand. (5)

Cleanness: And We send down purifying water from the sky, (48)

Beauty and Civilization: It is He Who sends down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they

begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! In these things there are signs for people who believe. (99)

Thirst Satisfier: And we send the winds fertilizing, and cause water to descend from the sky, and give it you drink. It is not you who are the holders of the store thereof. (22)

- **Soil**

Soil, the raw material of human creation and his final house, is the element in which all humane material needs exist. On the other hand, occasionally it could be replaced with water in preparation of man for his religious duties. Earth is man's prostration place and touching it so important that in some cases replaces water; so it could be used in many ways. The easiest way is using it in urban parks or public and private open areas.

- **Other elements**

Other elements such as plants, animals, mountain, sky and heavenly bodies should be accessibly regarded in urban planning. Not only these elements have material benefits but also are factors for brooding and notification. They also are factors for noticing time, place and direction.

One possible objection is put forward that these natural elements are inaccessible and could not play an important role in urbanization. Regarding this issue, what is important is to make these facilities accessible and visible, and utilizing characteristics they have such as light, position, time and their impact on earth and man and etc. Considering these issues could be effective in: the level of using artificial light in the building, the size and dimension of the entrances, type of energy used in cooling and heating, level of pollution and etc.

- **Natural laws**

Laws governing the nature and their results, firstly are mentioned in Islamic text as a factor to think, reason, and remember God's knowledge, power and oneness. Secondly, they have always been the paragon of wise people. The most important laws are: unity, balance, order, beauty, harmony as mentioned earlier.

- **Urban elements and architecture**

There are lots of elements in every city or building which separately demand their own characteristics. For example features and characteristics of a mosque are different from those of a house. However, we tried to mention in this part those verses about urban elements or architecture or what clarifies these features as a guide for further studies.

- **Residence (house)**

There are various subjects about residence. Quran's verses mention some of them which are dealt with in this part.

Place of rest: It is God who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you.

This verse clarifies that location of the house in a city is an important and sensitive issue. In other words, considering this principle plays a significant role in locating a house in a city and its relationship and neighborhood with noisy operations and contaminators and what threatens human tranquility. This affects the type of materials used and the construction of internal spaces and their relationship.

Getting sunlight: And thou might have seen the sun when it raised move away from their cave to the right, and when it set go past them on the left, and they were in the cleft thereof. That was (one) of the portents of Allah. He whom Allah guides, he indeed is led a right, and he whom He sands astray, for him thou wilt not find a guiding friend. (17)

This verse emphasizes on location of the house to get most of the sunlight.

Respecting neighbor's rights:

Respecting neighbor's rights is a subject who should be taken into account when designing a house. In other words the designer should think of a place in which intentional and unintentional violation of neighbor's rights is avoided.

Place of prayer: AllamehTabatabaei says: A house in which God is a prayed and glitters like stars for inhabitants of the Earth.

Conclusion

When it is time for MullaSadra, not only we see the synthesis of all Islamic schools, but also, moreover, we witness synthesis of preceding perspectives on the meaning of the word philosophy. He emphasizes that this world has more realities than the material world. Art is the human's existing manner, and man is artist as he is the representative of the adjectives like creative, inventor, beautiful, beauty-lover, powerful, scientist ..., and all these are given by God not chosen by man. Therefore, the effect of philosophy on Islamic urban planning, Iranian gardens, and Islamic cities is clearly seen, and the ideology of architects and urban planners of different periods of history can be studied.

Verses of Quran do not introduce details for designing and construction of life environment which are related to technical issues (apparently); instead clarify on principles which should be included in different aspects of human life including construction of city and environment. This inclusion will result in unity in identity and spirit of Islamic cities though built in different regions of the world with different materials. Clarification of theoretical principles of Islamic urban planning based on Islamic rules is a necessity. These theoretical principles, if compiled, can give criteria with which it will be possible to evaluate programs and plans, fabrics of historical cities, and imported ideologies and models.

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