

Persian Enclosed Garden: Recognition & Recreation of the Persian Garden

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Abstract. In these days of worldwide political stress, most of us crave moments of peace and security, a chance to mediate and smell the air, or quite literally experience the scent of flowers. We can find this peace in an enclosed garden. The main goal of this research is to find a solution to have more balance between natural and artificial environment in order to achieve a higher level of mental health standards in 21st century urban life style. In this way, this research tries to rethink the Persian garden as one of the ancient paradigms which has regenerated itself through the history frequently. This study shows that the “environmental DETACH in Persian garden can lead us to spiritual ATTACH”¹. The word for “paradise” derives from the Persian word “Pardis” for a garden and usually has the same meaning in every culture and language. In these gardens, many things are designed just to stimulate our five senses simultaneously. This attraction of all senses, according to environmental psychology research, makes a concentration place in Persian gardens. In order to rethinking Persian garden, this research tries to recognize it in the Iranian traditional arts such as carpet, miniature, literature and so on.

Key words: Persian gardens, environment, re-creation, psychology research, concentration.

1. Definition & Introduction

Persian garden, one of the oldest and most important amongst world gardens was mentioned several times in old scripts from ancient Greece or in Torah etc. Agriculture and gardening were highly appreciated in old Persian beliefs and rituals. The legends talk about "King Manoucher", the founder of mythical gardens as well as Cyrus the great whose perfect-geometry designed gardens are adored in documents. Based on this, Iranians are acknowledged by various cultures as the founders of "garden". In the Persian garden, garden architecture system is consisting of organizing, operational, physical and semantic systems. Also, systems of landscape, perspective, light, shadow and sound are combining and mixing the resulting quality of physical system. They are specific for Persian garden. Most researchers emphasize that "in the Iranian garden materialism will be improved to spirituality"². In fact, concludes that Persian garden creates a pure, calm space. It is a space of any tension and an environment of great thinking³. It can be said that the quality of comfort and relaxation and a place for thought, contemplation, meditation and creativity creates by structural elements such as number, geometry, color and material. Persian garden is both physical and spiritual experience. The aroma of succulent plant, melody of water and birds, smooth tiled texture and taste of wet earth and the sun, fruits, flowers and colorful mosaics have been reflected in a calm catchment, is outstanding. These characteristics are existed both in symbolic and abstract level and in the experimental level, in the same time⁴.

2. Background & Context

The subject of Persian gardens was a matter of interest for tourists and western countries ambassadors in the past centuries; as noticed in many of their itineraries and diaries. Orientalists generally observed, Persian gardens, but not in detail. Neither Iranian

¹ Shahcheraghi 2016: 301.

² Mirfendereski 2004: 10.

³ Ardalan and Bakhtiar 2004: 68.

⁴ Herdeg 1990.

architectures paid enough to subject, and most of the texts merely discuss historical or descriptive theories, and much more less was being said about Iranian beliefs in gardens. A deep interest in the subject and causes of evolution in gardening after Islam, among with fascination about the garden as a manifestation of heaven on earth, made the author to perform vast investigation and research about gardens and to present papers about them.

3. Principal Questions About The Research

- Why is it necessary for regenerating Persian garden?
- What exactly defines a “Persian Garden”?
- What are structural, functional and contextual systems of Persian garden?
- What are paradigms of Persian garden recognition?
- How is presented Persian garden in other Iranians arts?

4. Research Objectives

The main goal is to find a solution to have more balance between natural and artificial environment in order to achieve a higher level of mental health standards in 21st century urban life style. In this way, this research tries to rethink the Persian garden as one of the ancient paradigms which has regenerated itself through the history frequently. Based on the point that „Gardening for the Soil is now changed to Gardening for the Soul”, this study shows that the „environmental DETACH in Persian gardens can lead us to spiritual ATTACH”, this approach propose a practical solution for architects, how to re-create garden in contemporary language design, because as it was mentioned before: „RE-CREATING Persian Garden Architecture Order can RECREATE humans’ soul”⁵.

5. Theories

The word for „paradise” derives from the Persian word „Pardis” for a garden and usually has the same meaning in every culture and language. It is representative of „paradise on earth” and is our opportunity to own a simulation of heaven – here and now. It has a restorative significance as a healer when we understand that gardens provide us with a place of sanctuary and well-being. The earliest Persian desert gardens were walled to keep out marauders, both human and animal, and drifting sand. In those days raw nature was the enemy. The garden, watered by rills, pools and fountains made living possible, with shade trees, orchard fruit and crops for sustenance and flowers for scent. From the beginning the love of flowers was reflected in poetry. With the coming of Islam, these terrestrial gardens attained a sacred element, a metaphor for the celestial Paradise to be enjoyed after death by the true believer. Through more recent centuries these gardens, with their logical geometric grid system, have achieved a universal appeal. Today the enclosed inner garden becomes an escape from a concrete jungle of the crowded city in which we live, and reflects a return to love and appreciation of nature, and perhaps above all a place to meditate and rest.

6. Necessity of Research

The aim of this research is analyzing the theory based upon the documents and proofs. It tries for citation to present available gardens attempting to eventually settle to either accept or

⁵ Shahcheraghi 2016: 301.

reject the theory partially or in whole. In recent times, although the green spaces in Iran cities have been built with ignorance toward original principals of gardening adored by all cultures, but, this research tries to understand, criticize and analyze the typology of Persian gardens in respect to affecting factors. This research is providing the means and to ease applying the practical experience of Persian garden in the design of modern gardens that meet modern Iranian's needs; a dawn of a new revolution in national gardening in the country.

7. Methods

From the point of view of research nature, this research is classified as a historical- psychological-scientific-field study. From the point of view of motivation for research, however, is considered to be a pure theoretical research. Three different methods are applied as below:

1. Historical method in which the context of time and location is used for documents verification and validation. In this way, detection of narrator and comparison between the various versions and different narrations is applied.
2. All the factors and theories playing role in generating of Persian garden are analyzed on historical- descriptive basis method. Also the criteria and beliefs of Iranians about Paradise and its manifestation are determined.
3. The resources of maps, layouts, pictures and descriptions of gardens are used to spot gardens like the "Chahar Bagh" garden street in Isfahan, or other gardens with same particular properties and characteristics; and then incorporeal review of them was carried out.

In this state, properties of each selected garden like origin, name, water design, function or descriptions should be determined.

8. Data Collection Method

Due to the fact that gardens, unlike architecture and works of arts, are in constant danger of rapid destruction, therefore remained gardens from the past are very few; hence the information essential is collected mostly by library methods. It includes two kinds of documents:

1. Written documents such as:
 - Written documents such as papers, English/Persbook or magazines and written info available on internet.
 - Historical books described Persian gardens like itineraries etc.
 - Holy texts, religious book, myths and literature in which there is evidence of faith in Paradise and its description, such as the Holy Bible, Torah, Koran, Avesta etc.
2. Actual documents such as:
 - Paintings in which there are images of Persian gardens and plants which Iranians used to be interested in.
 - Historical gardens, tomb-gardens and their remanis.

9. Limits to the research

Because this research is a kind of historical study with all case studies aligned accordingly, so it is obvious that neither time nor limited resource access allowed performing the deep ancient archeological study in order to obtain new data. As the result, best practice was to go through as many available books and documents as possible. Furthermore, due to lack of sufficient observations or information, it became inevitable to study the evidences belong to

specific eras. The other alternative was to study those principles of Persian gardening that did not alter throughout history.

10. Conclusion

According to Fig.1. the body of this research consists of three main parts:

- First part titled "Necessity of garden regeneration" explains and discusses the vitals and requirements for the modern man living condition and the relation and bonding between man and Mother Nature.
- In second part titled "What really is a Persian garden?" the garden is described from different angles of its functionality.
- The third part of research attempts to figure out a "Way to re-generation of architectural system of Persian garden".

At the end a proposal is recommended in order to regenerate Persian garden as a Paradise (Heaven) seeking inspiration for regeneration of the human soul.

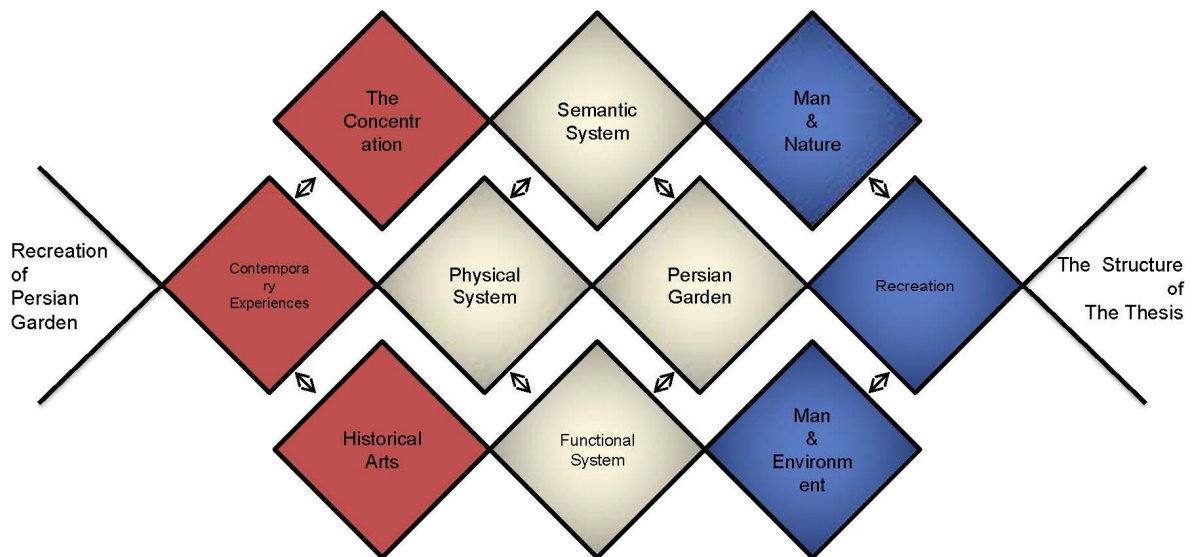


Fig. 1. Diagram of research structure.

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