

# Khawaja Garden, Narrated by "Nezami Ganjavi"<sup>1</sup> Representation of Persian Garden Pattern Based on the Interpretation of a Story In Masnavi of Haft-Paykar

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**Abstract** | Structural and spatial representation of various gardens of different era in Iran based on archeological and historical literatures and documents is one of the major fields in surveying Iranian gardens. These surveys can assist us to gain a better perspective and understanding of pattern and structure of Iranian gardens.

Utilizing a story from Masnavi Haft-Paykar, this current article attempts to introduce a lesser known pattern of Iranian gardens belonging to past historical periods. In this poetry, Nezami describes a complex garden composed of two parts, an internal (Golestan) and an external (Boostan) parts. A mansion (Hejabgah) existed in between those parts.

Boostan was an enclosed part located between high walls exclusively for women's privacy and occupancy. The view of Boostan was only available through the mansion. This represents a kind of garden which can be found in Masnawi of "Vis-O-Ramin" to some extent. Similarly, these spatial images may be extracted from earlier stories with much older historic roots in literature. Furthermore, it is possible that poets such as Fakhreldyn As'ad Gorgani and Nezami in narrating older stories visualized their knowledge of fifth and sixth centuries so that the stories could be matched with the ancient stories. Finding a proper answer to this question is extremely difficult. However, existing images in works of both poets can help us in recognizing a new configuration and pattern and allows us to gain a better comprehension of garden design in Iran.

**Keywords** | Persian garden, Complex garden, Nezami Ganjavi, Masnawi Haft-Paykar.

**Introduction** | If our study of these gardens are based on existing documents, and Persian stories, when parts of stories occur within the space of a garden it may be able to assist us in understanding the characteristics of the garden spaces.

In these stories, the narrator not only explains the relationship of the main characters, but also narrates the main elements of the scene. In this case, reader can perceive the kind of garden by studying and interpreting the story.

Most Persian stories in their literary sense are written in much poetical form. In this document we study a short story from Nezami's "Khamse" in order to depict the entire space of a garden and especially imagine its important parts.

Hakim Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad-Ilyas Nezami Ganjavi was one of the greatest and most influential poets in Iran, and his Khamse (quintet), which consists of five Masnavi had a great impact on other poets thereafter. His date of birth is unknown, however surveying some of his works suggests the dates 530 (AH) and 614 (AH) for his birth and death date, respectively (Safa, 2002: 798-801).

Nezami's Haft-Paykar, which is one of his last works is stories about Bahram Gour (Bahram V, 420-438 AD), one of Sassanian kings (Nezami, 1388: 35). Nezami composed one of his Masterpieces, Haft-Paykar, in 5136 verses in 593 AH and dedicated it to Ala-eddin Corpa Arsalan, the king of Maragheh (Safa, 1381: 803). Meanwhile, some suggest that this was his last work (de Blois, 2002). Some have mentioned that in addition to the oral narratives, he utilized historical sources such as Bokhari and Tabariy; and used other works namely "Siyasat Nameh," "Qabus Nameh," "One Thousand and One Nights" and in particular Ferdowsi's "Shah-nameh" to compose this Masterpiece (Nizami, 1388: 35).

### Retrieval of Garden

Nezami describes and depicts a garden in the midst of a story being told by a princess of the "7th world in white dome" for Bahram. According to this description, a Master (Khajeh) had a garden just like "Eram" (Nizami, 1388: 854); and his garden was surrounded by other gardens like a harem:

He had a garden as a harem surrounded by others gardens (Idem: 854/ 17); while its soil was smelled as ambergris and its fruits tasted as fruits in paradise. Streams were flowing under its cypresses with green grass had surrounded them, and birds were singing in the garden. By describing details, Nezami mentions that the garden was surrounded by four walls: by its compass / four walls has been drawn (Idem: 854/ 24). According to his description, the wall was made of mud in multi-layers. He also mentions that because of high walls surrounding the building no evil eyes could penetrate inside: since the walls were high up to the moon / no evil eyes could get in (Idem: 854/ 22).

Saying that the garden was enclosed by four walls and due to the tall buildings, the inside of garden from outside was not visible which forms a contradiction in this line and can be a sign of

dual structure for the garden, for example garden consisted of two parts and two spaces or some buildings were surrounded by walls. However the garden was not completely surrounded by walls (Idem: 854). For instance, there did not exist any massive buildings inside the garden to restrict the entire garden space or the outdoor was not restricted by four walls.

The Master used to go to the garden every week on his free time, however on this very last occasion he found the door locked and found the gardener asleep. Therefore, he started moving around the garden and inevitably entered by splitting the wall (Idem: 854-855). Then, two gorgeous garden guards appeared while punishing the Master who entered the garden discretely, filled the split by thistle (see 856-855). They told the Master that all beautiful ladies had gathered there as guests (see 856). Then, they asked him to join them, and took him to a private corner to choose one of ladies as a reward in recompense for their bad behavior towards the Master. They took him where they planned. Poet stated that there was the mansion made of mud-bricks in front of two observers who were the same gorgeous guards: in front of those two observers of that paradise/ there was an adobe mansion (Idem: 857/81). This means two gorgeous guards took the Master to the mansion. He entered the pavilion and two gorgeous guards went back. Taking him there was to set him hidden to watch the ladies. According to the poem, in the middle of pavilion wall, there was a hole through which he could see a spring and a pool:

There was a small opening in the middle of the wall / light was piercing through the eye-size opening in the wall;

Through the hole, Master's eyes saw a small spring with much abundant water (Idem: 867/ 83-84).

He was hidden from outdoor beautiful ladies. Obviously, Master had not seen any of them before coming to the mansion, since the poet has not mentioned anything about spring and water before. Nezami mentioned "beautiful ladies in outdoors" were coming. It means they were coming to a wide area so Master was able to see them.

Those outdoor beautiful ladies saw everything from pool to moon;

Walking gracefully they came to the pool / undressing themselves (Idem: 857/ 95 and 97).

Before their arrival, the poet describes the landscape as a piece of grassland beside cypresses (Sarvestan): in grassland of Boostan/ there was a prairie (Chaman) beside the Cypress (Idem: 857/ 91). The Boostan can be used in contrast with this garden where its wall was spilt by Master. So in contrast with the garden where was full of barbed flowers and cedars which poet had mentioned it as "Golestan" (Idem: 854/ 20), there was another place named Boostan which to enter it was only possible through Golestan and ladies could swim in there without being seen. Therefore, the garden described by poet earlier consisted of two parts: Boostan and Golestan. This means that the garden had a place named Golestan

where Master by splitting the wall could enter. Otherwise, entering another place named Boostan, where those beautiful ladies could swim without being seen, was only possible from inside of the garden (Idem: 857), and the Master could just watch them through the hole in the mansion's wall. There was a piece of grassland in Boostan by the cypresses. So considering that Nezami had mentioned repeatedly the presence of cedars in Golestan, it is obvious that Golestan was the same as cypress garden (Sarvestan) and Boostan was located by the cypresses.

This description revealed that there was chaman in grassland. So chaman were considered as the main plot (Dehkhoda, 1998), or the main area was a garden or Boostan which Master could watch it through the hole in the wall. There was also a pool made of white marbles decorated by Lilies and narcissuses and jasmines around it and beautiful ladies were swimming there:

Marbled-pool /the name Kawthar was written on it  
... Around that clear spring / flowers were growing. (Nizami, 2009: 857/ 92 and 94).

Two gorgeous guards were back to ask about his choice of beautiful ladies (Idem: 858-859). Poet said that guards found Master in the mansion and asked him with vagueness about his choice:

"They found Master at pavilion, with vagueness asked him of his work,

Within all these beautiful angels, which is your desire most (Idem: 859/ 130-131)."

Here the poet clarifies the confidant roles of the two: they are the confidant guards of the garden.

That these two confidant guards, are beautiful women, is referred back in Nezami's story in which the garden was exclusively occupied by women. It seems that Nezami has intermixed the roles of guards and special confidants together for them. Just like court's confidants and servants, these two gorgeous guards did not enter the surrounding area where women swim. Just like the mansion or probably parted areas of the mansion exist in, the area which in view of narrator is located in a covered area or keeps an area covered; this area must be the Boostan surrounding the marbled pool. Simultaneously, it is pointed out that "mansion" is a contained and covered area. If so, it is clear that other than an observatory hole in the wall there were no other ways to view Boostan. Since entering the mansion was possible only through Golestan, it was considered as a part of it and outer part of Master's garden.

It should be noted that the Master could see grassland and chaman through the observatory hole and narrator describes his view of grassland, pool and beauties swimming just after his arrival in the pavilion. Therefore Boostan was not visible

from the garden or Golestan and other than the observatory hole there were no other connections. Considering above, the building in which contained the mansion was located in a space between the two gardens "Golestan" and "Boostan".

The pattern for bāghe Khajeh (Master's garden) is not unique. In studding and interpreting Masnavi of "Vis-O-Ramin" by Fakhraddin As'ad Gorgani, I explained that the house of "Shah e Moubad" was composed of two gardens one of which was enclosed within the building and the other one was located in front of main palace. Palace was connected to both "Golestan" and "Boostan" through the porch.

According to narrator's description, the old adobe mansion (pavilion) collapsed. This happens while the Master and his selected lady, the "beauteous harpist", were inside the mansion (Idem: 860). In order not to be seen, each ran away in different directions. Therefore, it can be perceived that pavilion or adobe mansion located between two gardens or two parts of a garden was probably located in a passageway within the garden ending at the main building and the garden wall. Even if it is not so, the mansion which is considered the upper-most part of garden and was located descriptively in the garden. Perhaps it is possible to comprehend better the initial description of the narrator regarding the description of four walls surrounding the garden and that these tall structures keeps evil eyes away from "Garden." It appears that initially the poet has described both parts of the garden with their overall characteristics. One of which was surrounded by a walls and the other was surrounded by high buildings like a vast yard. Furthermore a better understanding of the poem "the master had a garden like Eram surrounded by other gardens as a harem" is possible.

According to this description, there existed gardens which surrounded the Master's garden like a harem. A place which can be viewed from the observatory hole and contains a pool for beautiful women's swimming, points to a part of garden which is a "harem" as per Nezami.

It was also similar to the garden and the palace of the Shah Moubad (in Masnavi of Vis-O-Ramin), where Fakhruddin As'ad had spoken of the shabistan or harem which had a Boostan in the middle.

What is mentioned in this article and the previous case study in reviewing Masnavi of Vis-O-Ramin, reveals some images of the garden's layout. This image may be derived from the setting of the scene of the narratives that have older roots; and might have also made opportunity for Fakhruddin As'ad Gorgani and Nezami to redefine poetic narations in the fifth and sixth centuries. It is difficult to answer this question now. However these comprehensive images are useful enough to help us to depict the layout of the garden and to elevate our knowledge about Iranian gardening, so it should not be disregarded.

**Conclusion** | Nezami in Haft-Paykar has described a garden (Khawaja Garden), which was located outside the city and in the suburbs. According to Nezami's narration, garden had a composite layout made of two distinct parts. The first part was more accessible and easy to enter. Other than entrance, the section which sometimes called "Golestan" had walls consist of four muddy layers. This part which was called "external" garden was a Sarvestan (cypresses bed) that was decorated with flowers. There was also a pathway mentioned by poet at the time of the collapse of the "old mansion". His description reveals that two gorgeous ladies as porter while talking, took him to a point which was adjacent or connected to the mansion. Pavilion was at upper-most of the building located in the garden surrounded by walls or might had been the main building. This was in consistent with the description of the poet about buildings collapse and the scape of Master and "beauteous harpist". This building and subsequently its mansion were located in a place that the view of the hidden part of the garden was only possible through its observatory hole and at the same time functioned as a cover for that part. Therefore Master's garden was surrounded by a wall and did not have any summerhouse but instead had room in the upper-most as mansion. The mansion should have been a part of the outer-most of garden and did not have any opening to Boostan, for example through the use of a hole in the wall he could see the pool and hidden beautiful ladies. Still, existence

of an entrance or connection to Boostan was possible. Even if so, "the mansion" played the role of a partition for internal and external gardens and through it entering to Boostan, the private part of the garden, could be possible. It means that the mansion and building around it separated two gardens. At the back of the mansion or behind the buildings which the mansion was a part of it, had located another garden that was private and hidden from other people. The private garden had a marbled swimming pool. Based on the story that Master went into the mansion to watch "Garden of Paradise" it seemed that there was no other way to watch it. This confirmed Nezami's primary description who said high buildings kept away evil eyes. In fact, Nezami intermingles two internal and external parts of the garden, and at first he just explained the main characteristics of Khawaja Garden. In this way, his description introduced an Iranian complex garden. First he gave a description of characteristics for both Gardens implicitly. But an evaluation of the study on his poetry showed that Khawaja garden was made up of two distinct parts, and a mansion between these two parts, and more importantly these two-parts were called "Golestan" and "Boostan". Selecting the names are also important as they have not been chosen accidentally. At least, this pattern of Persian garden with two separate open space and the same names was also obvious in Masnavi of Vis and Ramin Fakhraddin As'ad Gorgani.

## Endnotes

1. Nezāmi or Nizami, whose formal name was Jamal ad-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Ilyās ibn-Yūsuf ibn-Zakkī, was a 12th-century Persian Sunni Muslim poet.

2. See Noshabeh Arasely, about life and works of Nizami Ganjavi. Also see the introduction to Nezami's Khamse, edited under the supervision of A. Bertels at the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

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