

A Waterless Prosperous City

Yazd emerged at a central point in Iran at the intersection of two main roads, Kerman-Ray and Fars-Khorasan, at least in the Sassanid era. Due to the presence of the Iranian plateau at this point, Yazd turned into one of the cities with low water. However, with the growth in population and consumption, the water shortage in Yazd turned into a crisis. Yazd's water supply was in Shirkuh, a city 45 kilometers away from Yazd. The cities of Taft and Mehriz were constructed several centuries after Yazd, in the vicinity of Shirkuh. Yazd was initially a fortress serving as a guard and providing road services but gradually expanded. Since huge economic and military activities have long been dependent on the two old roads, Yazd is still a larger city than Taft and Mehriz. It has stronger civilizational and cultural indices compared to the national average, even though it has been farther from the water source.

Water, a manifestation of ancient Iranian civilization, received much attention in Yazd and outstandingly excelled. Water in Yazd, this prosperous but waterless city, was conceptualized in two ways: as a verse of existence and a symbol of goodness. It was a manifestation of existence and perfection (the legend of Anahita) and served as a symbol of perfect existence manifesting itself on Earth.

The lower and more sensible aspects of water in various shows were an attempt to grab the attention of users using different forms of water. The man-made symbols in natural elements, patterns, characters of nature, language, manners, and the like were the narrators of the beneficial qualities of water in the lives of the people of Yazd. This approach is a necessity for the continuation of life in the water-scarce area and serves as a means of water conservation.

The higher and emotional aspect of water's role in Yazd was creating situations in contact with water and water itself so that users could experience different effects of water. The maximum exposure to the existence of water in various forms was the agenda of expanding the ontological relationship between man and water. The capabilities of water and its various aspects were tangible in spaces and situations where the observer could look at the water from their perspective.

The architecture of Yazd is a well-known embodiment of the cultural-civilizational capacity of Yazd. Despite being a waterless city in an arid and barren area (desert), Yazd has been able to achieve superior development indicators. The growth of houses with courtyards centered on the water feature, which is the essence of the architecture of the house, is an example of this embodiment. In the path of the aqueducts passing underground, a connection with water was established wherever possible, so that people could gather around the water's edge. The garden ditch splitting the ground of the courtyard to flow the water as an exemplary element in front of the residents is another example. The huge fountain in Daulatabad Garden has no justification in a water-scarce environment other than accentuating the glory of water. After carefully researching the formation of architecture in Yazd, it can be said that architecture in this city is based on water landscaping and human contact with water.

The cover photo of the author related to the Pahlavanpur Garden Pavilion in Mehriz is an example of landscaping with the approach of maximizing exposure to water and nature. The good feeling that the observer experiences in this space is created by immersion in the landscape through encountering and touching nature.

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