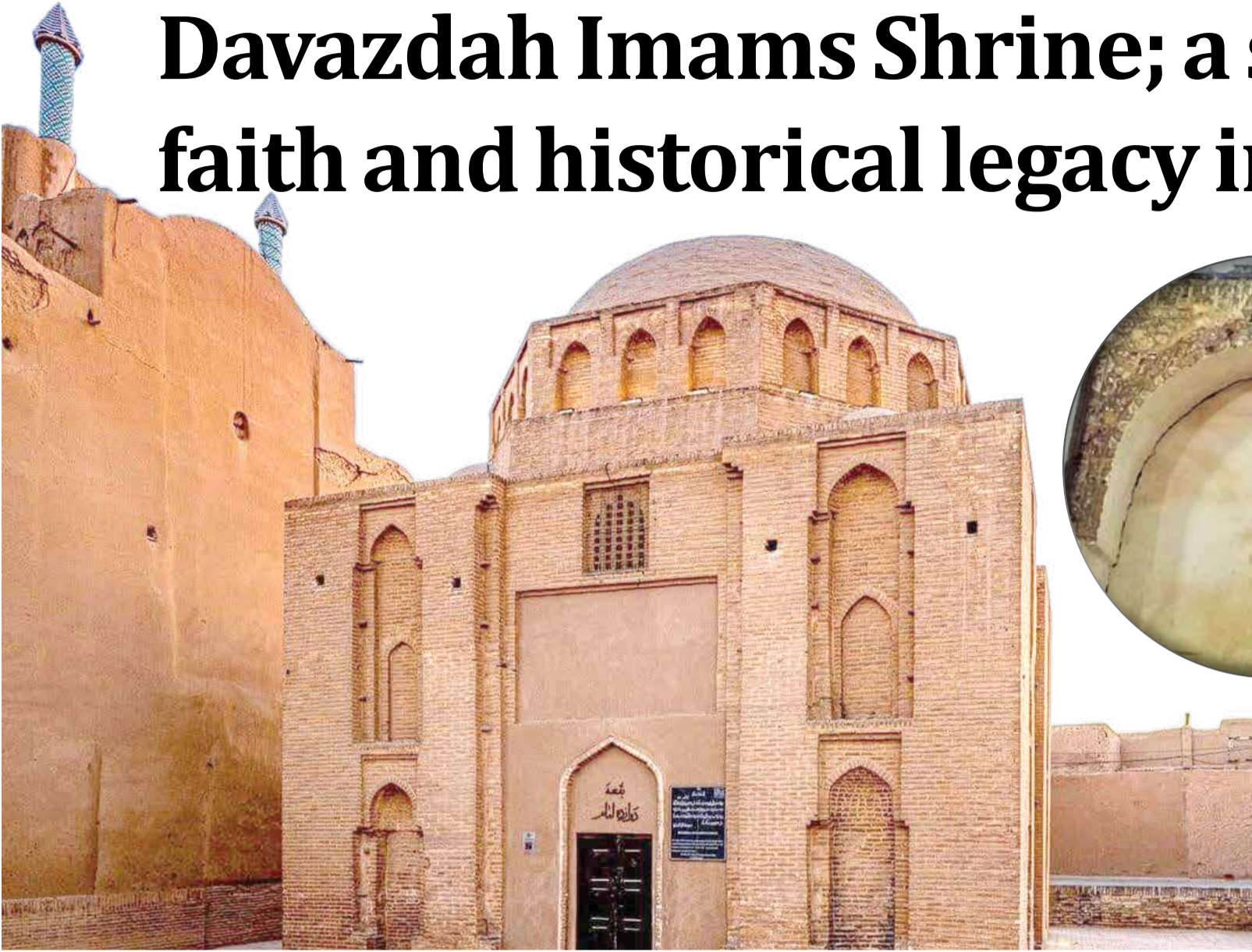


Davazdah Imams Shrine; a symbol of faith and historical legacy in Yazd



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The Davazdah Imam Shrine (12-Imams Shrine) stands as the oldest surviving structure in the central city of Yazd, evidenced by both historical documents and its distinct architectural features. This remarkable building, dating back to the Seljuk period, showcases unique elements characteristic of the era, such as a dome vault, a mihrab (altar), and various inscriptions that draw significant attention from visitors and historians alike. In 1934, the Davazdah Imams Shrine was officially recognized and added to the Iran National Heritage List, establishing it as one of the must-visit tourist attractions in Yazd.

Located in the Fahadan historical neighborhood, the Shrine sits adjacent to the Fahadan Hosseinieh and close to the historical Alexander's Prison (Ziaiyeh School). The roots of the Davazdah Imams Shrine trace back to the 11th century CE, and the reign of the Kakuyids. Notably, an inscription within the shrine identifies two benefactors of the structure: Abu Masoud and Abu Yaqub, who were generals under Amir Azod al-Din Alaa al-Dawlah Abu Jafar Kakuyeh.

Purpose of construction

In the inscriptions associated with the shrine, the building is referred to as the *qobbeh* (dome). However, the origin of the name "Twelve Imams" remains uncertain. Many believe this designation became customary during the Safavid period. Some theories suggest that the Shrine of Davazdah Imams may honor one of the descendants of Imam Sadiq (PBUH), with anecdotal references to a burial in the Fahadan neighborhood, although the precise location is presently unknown. Others contend that this historical monument serves as a memorial for the twelve Imams of Jafari Shiism, constructed in the architectural style typical of a tomb, despite the absence of a marked grave within.

Architectural features

The Davazdah Imams Shrine is a *chahartaq* (four-arch) structure fea-

tured entrances on three sides, all of which face the Qibla. Originally, its entrance doors were accessible from the north, east, and west; however, over time, the east and west entrances have been sealed, leaving only the north entrance open to visitors. Upon entering through this doorway, one is greeted by a mihrab (altar) adorned with intricate tilework on the southern wall.

The shrine's mihrab showcases elegant tile decorations in hues of azure, turquoise, green, yellow, and white. Despite being significantly damaged over time, its beauty has endured. This altar is believed to date back to the 9th and 10th centuries CE, from the Alid dynasty, and, according to archaeological studies, it was originally part of an old mosque that was later integrated into the tomb complex. Further research is necessary to investigate

the exquisite plasterwork attributed to the Ilkhanate period.

The mihrab is marked by a tombstone made of jade-colored marble, which has unfortunately been stolen. In subsequent periods, a second tombstone attributed to Sheikh Fahadan was placed within the mihrab, but current records indicate no trace of it remains.

The Shine of the Davazdah Imams features a dome vault, structured in a square shape, measuring 11 meters on each side. The interior dimensions reach 8.25 meters, with a small latticed window on one of the walls providing both lighting and ventilation. The dome, notable for its simplistic beauty and lack of tile decoration, rests on an octagonal design that facilitates the transition from the round dome to the square base, a feat achieved through squinch construction technique. This

technique allows a quadrilateral structure to adapt into an octagonal base, before culminating in a dome. The architectural design includes three false arches on each side of the octagonal base.

Inscriptions

The shrine features a total of four distinct inscriptions located in various areas:

Main entrance inscription: A verse from the Holy Qur'an written in Kufic script.

East gate inscription: Another verse from the Holy Qur'an.

Colored tile inscription: Located inside the mausoleum on the eastern wall, listing the builders' names in Kufic script.

Dome inscription: Positioned at the dome's base, featuring Ayat al-Kursi with additional references to the architects and more verses from the Holy Qur'an.

Embrace the allure of Cheshmeh Belqais Garden



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Cheshmeh Belqais Garden is located near the city of Charam along the Charam-Gachsaran road, approximately 220 kilometers southwest of Yasuj in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. The garden is situated in a plain known as Shahrak-e Qal'eh Karreh Shahbazi.

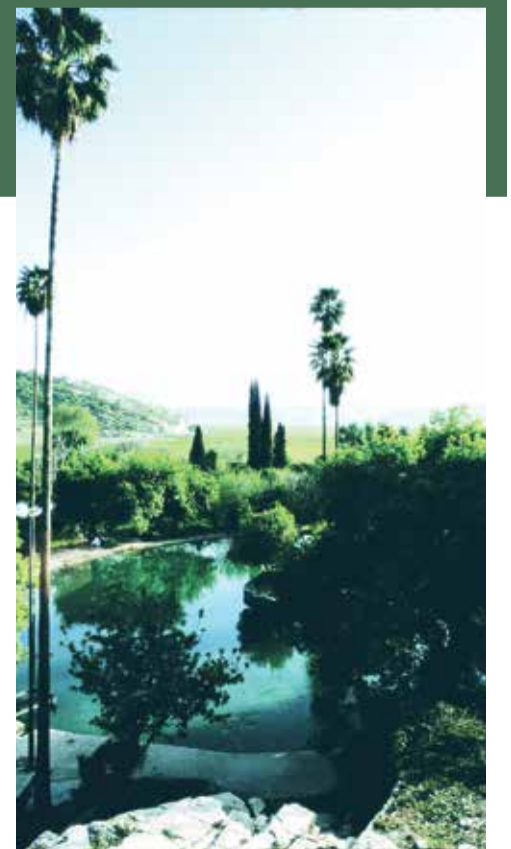
Prior to 1941, Cheshmeh Belqais was primarily a woodland area covered with willow and European ash trees. The construction of this Iranian garden began in 1944 with the planting of trees, paving, and the creation of pools and bridges. An irrigation system was also developed, utilizing water springs and river flows to enhance the garden's organization. This initial development was completed in 1957, and the garden underwent renovations in 2014, during which handmade

waterfalls, glass bridges, tourist lounges, and gazebos were added to the complex.

Today, Cheshmeh Belqais Garden covers approximately 5.5 hectares. A notable feature is a tower on the western side that stands 50 meters tall and 7 meters wide, while large stones in the eastern part of the garden were used to construct a 20-meter waterfall. At the heart of Cheshmeh Belqais Garden lies a pool with a radius of 4 meters and a depth of 1.5 meters. This pool has two waterways that integrate into the overall irrigation system. Water from the springs circulates throughout the garden, with all the waterways leading to a larger channel that flows into the pool. The surplus water from the pool irrigates local wheat, grain, and rice farms in Charam, eventually

flowing into the Nazmakan River, which feeds into the Kosar Dam. The garden's vegetation includes a diverse array of plants, such as walnuts, pears, apples, sour lemons, figs, mulberries, and bitter oranges. Additionally, eucalyptus, cedar, oak, persimmon, orange, tangerine, grape, and palm trees enhance its beauty. A lighting system installed throughout the garden illuminates these trees, creating a stunning display at night.

Adjacent to Cheshmeh Belqais Garden is Omran Garden, which was constructed at the same time. A bit further away lies Berkena Garden. The area also features two historical castles: Tal-e Babuneh (locally known as Tal-e Babineh) and Ghal'eh Fashian, both of which are registered on the National Heritage List.



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