

# Spiritual significance of blacksmithing in Kermanshah

## Iranica Desk

Kermanshah, one of the most significant centers of civilization in Iran during the Iron Age, played a crucial role in the development and progress of this period. Numerous archaeological artifacts uncovered in Kermanshah from this era attest to its rich civilizational history and the vital role this region played

in the context of Iran and the wider world.

Aziz Mostafaei, an anthropologist with a PhD and an expert in intangible cultural heritage, noted that in the early days, when humans began using stone to create primitive tools, a fundamental transformation occurred in their way of life. These tools, essential for

hunting, self-defense, and daily tasks, not only ensured human survival but also marked significant steps toward the formation of civilization. This newfound capability enabled humans to overcome challenges from nature, acquire additional resources, and develop more complex social structures and group collaborations, ultimately leading to further advancements in their lives.



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With the onset of the Iron Age and the widespread adoption of metal, profound changes emerged in the lives of early humans. Iron, known for its high durability and diverse practical applications, became a crucial element in many aspects of life. This transformation altered lifestyles significantly while also impacting the social, economic, and military structures of societies. Iron tools enhanced agricultural productivity, thereby increasing food production, while iron weapons provided tactical advantages in warfare, chntn.ir wrote.

into advanced metal industries and ironworking in the area. The tools and metal objects discovered — including weapons, agricultural tools, and jewelry — demonstrate the high skill and technical knowledge possessed by craftsmen during the Iron Age. These achievements underscore the thriving metal industries and the key role Kermanshah played in the broader narrative of human civilization.

Due to its unique geographical position, Kermanshah has been vital for cultural, economic, and technological exchanges. This region lies along es-

skill as more than just technical artistry; it is considered a divine gift and a special selection from God. In the eyes of the locals, blacksmiths are not merely skilled craftsmen but are seen as bearers of blessings, sanctity, and a unique connection to divine forces.

These cultural beliefs suggest that blacksmithing in Kermanshah is not only an economic profession but also a vital part of the region's cultural and mythical identity, imbued with spiritual significance and prestige. This blend of history, mythology, and culture surrounding blacksmithing underscores its social and cultural importance in the community.

Blacksmiths occupy a unique position in Kermanshah's culture and arts; many are not only adept in their craft but also skilled musicians, particularly tambour players. This connection between blacksmithing and music is especially evident among ritual tambour players in Kermanshah, highlighting the deep bond between profession, art, and spirituality within this culture. Kermanshah's blacksmiths are not just craftsmen; they are also custodians of ritual and cultural traditions passed down through generations.

The relationship between blacksmithing and music reflects the commitment of these artisans to preserving and transmitting local culture and ancient beliefs. The art of tambour playing, deeply intertwined with Kurdish rituals and mysticism, has strong roots in this region, and blacksmiths play a crucial role in sustaining these traditions. Another fascinating aspect of blacksmithing in Kermanshah is the use of natural wind in the iron smelting process. In the mountainous areas around Kerend, strong winds are harnessed as a natural source for blowing into iron smelting furnaces. The historical remains of these furnaces, still found in the mountains, showcase the skill and technical knowledge of the local people. By utilizing these natural winds, they achieved the necessary temperatures for melting iron, demonstrating an advanced level of

indigenous technology in resource utilization for metallurgy.

This innovation, combined with the connection between blacksmithing and ritual art, paints a comprehensive picture of the skill, ingenuity, and cultural richness of Kermanshah's people. These characteristics have transformed blacksmithing from a mere profession into a fundamental element of the region's historical and cultural identity.

Historically, Kermanshah blacksmiths were renowned craftsmen, particular-

underwent fundamental transformations. As the government monopolized weapon production, Kermanshah blacksmiths shifted their focus to creating practical tools for daily life and agriculture. This shift led them to develop skills in crafting items such as kitchen knives, gardening tools, agricultural equipment like shovels and pickaxes, and simple hunting gear.

This adaptation not only illustrated the blacksmiths' ability to respond to new conditions but also highlighted the ongoing significance of their craft



Moreover, the expanded use of iron bolstered trade and goods exchange, laying the groundwork for the emergence of more advanced and organized societies. Hence, the Iron Age is regarded as a pivotal moment in the history of human civilization. This era allowed humanity to create new tools for warfare and defense, granting significant power to groups in the face of external and natural threats.

Kermanshah's strategic geographical location along the Silk Road, as a bridge between Eastern and Western civilizations, has made it a hub for cultural, commercial, and even military exchanges. The iron tools, decorative objects, and architectural remains found in this region reflect the technical and artistic advancements of the time.

Due to its favorable natural conditions, Kermanshah has also played a significant role in the production and use of iron, including mountains and rich mineral resources. The discovery of cemeteries, ancient mounds, and industrial sites related to iron smelting and tool-making highlights the importance of this region as one of the centers of Iron Age civilization. Evidence shows that Kermanshah has significantly influenced not only the region's history but also the evolution of human civilization, making it a treasure trove of Iran's cultural heritage. Archaeological excavations in Kermanshah have provided valuable insights

essential communication routes between East and West and served as a major stop on the Silk Road, facilitating interactions among diverse civilizations. Findings also indicate that Kermanshah was not only a pioneer in the production and use of metal tools but also significantly contributed artistically to the creation of decorative objects with cultural and ritual significance, establishing Kermanshah as one of the key centers for cultural and civilizational development in Iran and beyond.

The people of Kermanshah hold deep and specific beliefs about the profession of blacksmithing. They view this

ly recognized for their weapon-making skills. During the Safavid era and under Nader Shah, these blacksmiths gained fame for their expertise in crafting swords, shields, and spears. Historical documents indicate that Kermanshah blacksmiths played a vital role in equipping Nader Shah's army and other rulers. Local narratives also suggest that some blacksmiths were involved in creating more complex weaponry, employing techniques that remain in the collective memory of the region to this day. With the onset of the Pahlavi era and significant social and political changes in Iran, the blacksmithing profession

in meeting the everyday needs of the community. By preserving this art and passing it on to future generations, Kermanshah blacksmiths continue to be recognized as integral to the cultural and historical identity of the region. From crafting weapons in the past to producing essential tools in contemporary times, this profession has played a key role in the lives and economy of the people of Kermanshah.

The transformation of blacksmithing in Kermanshah—from weapon production to crafting tools for daily life and agriculture—exemplifies how this profession has adapted to societal needs. This evolution reflects the blacksmiths' deep understanding of social and economic developments and their ability to respond to new demands. During this period, blacksmithing became an essential part of daily life and agricultural production by providing the necessary tools for the community.

Today, metal tools remain vital in people's lives, and the craft of producing these tools continues to thrive. With advancements in technology and the emergence of sophisticated tools, modern blacksmiths blend traditional techniques with new innovations to create more precise and practical items. This continuity and evolution have established blacksmithing as a fundamental pillar of production and industry, maintaining its importance in the supply chain of human needs.

