

# Serene tomb of Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar in Dezfula



Iranica Desk

Dezful, a city in Khuzestan Province, is one of the ancient cities of Iran, renowned for its significant attractions, including the Dezful watermills. Nearby lies the ancient city of Gundeshapur, once one of the most prosperous cities in Iran, famed for its hospital and university. Adjacent to Gundeshapur is a remarkable building featuring a conical dome, the burial site of the celebrated hero Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar, and the founder of the Saffarid dynasty. The shrine, dating back to the Qajar era, has recently undergone restoration and honors the prominent Iranian commander. The tomb is

a key attraction in Dezful, located not far from the city. The surrounding cemetery, adorned with ancient gravestones, further attests to the site's historical significance. While the exterior of the shrine is relatively simple, its conical, serrated dome is regarded as one of the most beautiful in the province. The building serves as the final resting place of Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar, who played a crucial role in preserving the Persian language by declaring Persian Dari as the official language of the country. The tomb is situated in the northeastern part of Shahabad village, approximately 10 kilometers from

the Dezful to Shushtar road, within one of the most significant historical sites in Iran. The conical dome of the tomb is celebrated as one of the finest examples of this architectural feature in Khuzestan Province. Its grandeur and beauty are visible from a distance, indicating that this shrine was constructed for a noteworthy individual. The tomb structure features a single entrance that separates the interior from the exterior. It is primarily constructed from raw clay bricks, enhanced by bas-reliefs and mortar made from plaster and earth. The historical significance of the tomb dates back to the Seljuk and Qajar periods, with the oldest sections attributed to the Seljuk era following various restorations. Local residents recall that several decades ago, an inscription in ancient Arabic script was visible on the dome's wall, clearly citing the name of the great commander: Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar, the son of a blacksmith from Sistan. Renowned for his bravery and noble character, Ya'qub was chosen as a commander by a group of courageous men. His pop-



ularity among the people enabled him to rise to power, establishing his seat of government in the city of Zarng (present-day Zaranj in Afghanistan). When he ascended to power, the Abbasid dynasty held considerable influence in Iran. Dissatisfied with

their rule, he harbored ambitions of overthrowing them from the outset of his reign. After capturing Kerman, Neyshabur, and Khorasan, and overthrowing the Tahirid dynasty, Ya'qub marched into Khuzestan with the intention of top-

pling the Abbasids before proceeding to Baghdad. However, he was ultimately defeated in battle against the caliph and suffered severe throat injuries, forcing him to retreat. He returned to Susa to regroup his forces and plan another campaign

to Baghdad. According to historical accounts, he suddenly fell ill near present-day Dezful during his journey and passed away shortly after. Historians universally acknowledge Ya'qub's bravery, courage, intelligence, and political acumen.

# Splendid design of Aminoddole Caravanserai in Kashan Bazaar

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Kashan, a city in Isfahan Province, is renowned for its rich history and stunning architecture, with the Bazaar of Kashan standing out as one of its most significant attractions. The vibrant bazaar is not only a commercial hub but also a cultural landmark that reflects the intricate craftsmanship and architectural beauty of the region. At the heart of the bazaar lies the Aminoddole Caravanserai, known also as Aminoddole Timcheh, strategically located at the

intersection of Baba Afzal Street and Kamal al-Molk Square. This remarkable structure enhances the historical significance of the Kashan Bazaar. The term *tim* refers to a caravanse-  
rai, while *timcheh* denotes a smaller version of these lodgings. In contemporary usage, *timcheh* often refers to small, covered lodges that served traders and travelers alike. The bazaar has a storied past, having suffered destruction from an earthquake in the 19th century CE. It was subsequently rebuilt during the Qajar pe-

riod by the esteemed Farrokhan Khan Ghafari, known as Aminoddole. The construction of the *timcheh*, which was completed between 1863 and 1867 and designed by the architect Ali Marayam Kashani, represents one of the notable additions to the bazaar, showcasing the architectural prowess of the time. French traveler Madame Dieulafoy, who extensively documented her journeys through Iran in the late 19th century, provided insightful observations about the bazaars and caravanserais. She described

the vastness of the Bazaar of Kashan, noting its roof adorned with interconnected domes and several caravanserais that served as warehouses for merchants. These structures, distinct from those used for travelers, are characterized by their luxurious and ornate designs. Among these, the Aminoddole *Timcheh* stands out for its architectural elegance. Resembling a square-based prism, it features entrance doors on both sides and is constructed entirely of brick, creating a striking visual effect.

The three large openings in the ceiling allow natural light to flood the space, enhancing its grandeur. This significant building not only showcases the commercial importance of Kashan but also exemplifies the prosperity of the city through its valuable merchandise. The *timcheh* consists of three elevated, roofed levels, making it an impressive structure in terms of both width and length. Its captivating beauty is complemented by remarkable precision in stability and layout, with no visi-

ble cracks or fissures in its foundation even after a century. The ceiling is adorned with stunning muqarnas crafted from brick and tile, showcasing traditional Iranian arching. The absence of a structural framework allowed for a Roman-style covering, elevating the ceiling height and enhancing the overall aesthetic. Access to the Aminoddole *Timcheh* is through two large wooden doors, one leading to a small octagonal courtyard and the other to a larger rectangular courtyard to the south. To-

gether, these courtyards create a harmonious architectural masterpiece, regarded as one of the finest examples of Iranian architecture from the second half of the 13th century of the Islamic calendar. In summary, the Bazaar of Kashan and the Aminoddole *Timcheh* represent not only the commercial heart of the city but also its rich cultural heritage. Visitors to Kashan are treated to a glimpse of its historical significance, architectural beauty, and the vibrant life that continues to thrive within its walls.

