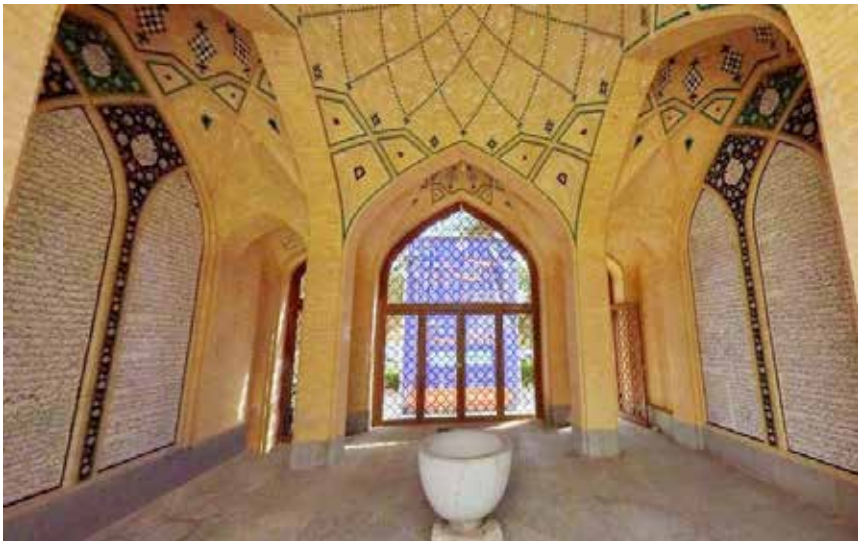


# Poetry, architecture shape Tekyieh Valeh’s fame

Iranica Desk

Isfahan, with its ancient history and rich culture, has always been the cradle of Iran’s art, literature, and philosophy. Within this historic city, the Takht-e Foulad Cemetery is not only the resting place of religious and mystical figures but also a guardian of cultural and artistic heritage. The tomb of Aqa Mohammad Kazem Valeh, also known as Tekyieh Valeh, with its unique architecture and artistic value, presents a special fusion of poetry, calligraphy, and Qajar-era architectural design. This historic Tekyieh (religious gathering place) stands as a memorial to the prominent poet and calligrapher of Isfahan, whose life and works reflect the literary and artistic culture of 13th-century Iran. According to historical accounts, this site was a literary and cultural gathering place for poets and artists of the time. The turquoise tilework, plaster inscriptions of poems, and stone columns adorned with Eslimi motifs greatly enhance its artistic and architectural significance, according to Mehr News Agency. The gravestone of Aqa Mohammad Kazem Valeh is inscribed in his own Ta’liq script and is considered a unique example of historical Iranian calligraphy. It testifies to Valeh’s skill and serves as a reminder of his literary and artistic stature within Isfahan’s cultural community. Aqa Mohammad Kazem Valeh, who used the pen name Valeh, was born between 1145 and 1150 AH in Isfahan. He was a master of Ta’liq and Nasta’liq scripts, attaining the rank of master after studying in Iraq. Valeh was also a distinguished poet, and his collection of poems remains a lasting legacy. His mastery of art and literature earned him a special position during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. In addition to calligraphy and



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poetry, he possessed significant knowledge in Arabic sciences, literature, philosophy, mysticism, and mathematics. On the western side of the Tekyieh, there are rooms that served as his residence and place of worship. The Tekyieh is located in the western part of Takht-e Foulad, adjacent to the Rukn-al-Molk Mosque. This building was constructed by Mirza Mohammad Hossein Khan Sadr Esfahani, then governor of Isfahan, in honor of Valeh. The architecture of the Tekyieh

features a brick dome adorned with turquoise tilework, eight stone columns decorated with Eslimi motifs, and plasterwork inscribed with poems by contemporary poets. These elements reflect the precision and elegance of Qajar-era architecture and the fusion of art and literature. The gravestone, written in Valeh’s own Ta’liq script, stands out as one of Iran’s most valuable calligraphic works. Visiting this historic Tekyieh offers an educational and impactful experience of Iran’s history and culture and serves as a

tribute to Valeh’s artistic and literary legacy. It also reflects the collaborative environment of poets, calligraphers, and artists of 19th-century Isfahan, a society where art and scholarship were deeply intertwined. Preserving its architectural authenticity and cultural values, the Tekyieh continues to welcome enthusiasts of Iranian history, art, and culture. It is regarded as one of Isfahan’s prominent cultural and tourist attractions, recalling the grandeur of art and literature during the Qajar period and its

heritage for future generations. The Tekyieh also highlights the enduring influence of Valeh’s work on contemporary Iranian calligraphy and poetry, ensuring that his legacy continues to inspire scholars and artists alike. In addition to Tekyieh Valeh, Isfahan is home to several other historical religious and cultural sites that showcase similar architectural and artistic features. The Chehel Sotoun Palace features intricate tilework and calligraphy, while the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque demonstrates exquisite harmony between ar-

chitecture and ornamental arts. Similarly, the Vank Cathedral in the Armenian quarter exhibits a blend of artistic styles that reflect Isfahan’s diverse cultural history. The Ali Qapu Palace, with its majestic terrace and fine murals, and the Jaame Mosque of Isfahan, with its layered architectural evolution spanning centuries, further illustrate the city’s rich heritage. These sites, along with Tekyieh Valeh, provide a comprehensive understanding of Isfahan’s artistic, literary, and intellectual legacy.

# Ilam’s jewelry reflects centuries of artistic tradition

Iranica Desk

The jewelry of ancient Iran has captivated the hearts and attention of people worldwide. Experts regard Iranian jewelry as unique exemplars of creativity that highlight the extraordinary craftsmanship of their makers. Ancient Iranian tribes inhabiting the Persian plateau around 200 BCE began crafting jewelry using seeds and colorful beads, reflecting their deep interest in decoration and adornment. Jewelry making saw significant advancements during the Achaemenid dynasty, with gold pieces becoming common. Armlets, bracelets, and rings emerged as popular adornments during that era. For centuries, the craft of traditional jewelry making has been one of the most celebrated handicrafts in Ilam and its surrounding cities. Like many other regions, Ilam’s women have always valued their beauty and appearance, often expressing their family and social status



through distinctive choices of makeup and jewelry. Historically, women wore makeup and jewelry designed to enhance their natural beauty and emphasize their features. They adorned their ears, noses, necks, hands, and feet with various rings and captivating earrings. Additionally, some women occasionally bore tattoos on parts of their

faces as part of their traditional adornment practices. The jewelry pieces of Ilam are predominantly crafted from colorful beads, stones, and gemstones indigenous to the region. Some distinguished examples include Sineriz or bib necklaces and headbands made from Pahlavi coins — the greater the number of coins, the higher the

wearer’s rank. These pieces are known as Haft Lireh or Panj Lire. Another example is Gol Kif, crafted from tiny glass beads and dried clove flowers, often infused with musk, used to fragrance and decorate dresses. Lasari pieces are used to embellish the sides of women’s headbands and hats and feature beads typically made of jade and turquoise.

Other common jewelry includes necklaces, earrings, brooches used to fasten garments or belts, anklets called Pawang, bracelets known as Desings, rings named Clowang, and Kohl holders or Sormehdan, traditionally made from goat skin to contain kohl eye makeup. While the practice of traditional jewelry making in Ilam has

diminished somewhat today, it remains an enduring symbol of the region’s rich cultural heritage. The craft exemplifies not only artistic excellence but also the cultural identity and social values that have been cherished by the Ilam community throughout history, continuing to inspire pride and appreciation among locals and visitors alike.



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