CHAPTER 3

Concept and Etymology of the Garden

3.1 Concept and Etymology of the Garden
3.2 Beginning of the Garden and Gardening
3.3 Garden – Monuments
3.4 Persian Gardens in other places of the world
3.5 Notes and Reference
3.1 The Meaning Garden

In Iranian culture, the garden is considered as a cultural phenomenon and the significant manifestation of architecture that like other cultural phenomena in traditional and ancient Iranian society is inspired by ideas and the Iranian worldview and is full of deep meaningful beliefs. To study this cultural phenomenon, meaning of garden should be understood from the base.

The Persian Garden is the result of a beautiful interaction between man and nature around him. In the Persian Garden natural elements have been disciplined along man-made elements in a very refreshing and eye-catching pattern. There are different definitions of the Persian Garden and words related to garden. Series of Discussions on Persian Garden definitions and terminology represents different views about this landscaping phenomenon.

In Persian literature, the Persian Garden is called Baghsara or Pardis. According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam definition; Garden is often an enclosed area, man-made and by using elements such as flowers and plants, trees, water and special structures, which is based on geometric rules and beliefs.\(^1\) Greek historians in their writings point out to houses in Iran three thousand years ago, where they were surrounded by gardens and the gardens around these houses are said to have been called Pardis.\(^2\)

Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (philologist and poet) writes about the meaning of the word "Pardis": Pardis word is derived from the Median language (Paradyza) meaning the Garden. That Paliz in Persian and Ferdows in Arabic are from the same word Pardis.\(^3\) In fact the ancient Persian word Parid Ize from which Greek and German Paradise taken from means peripheral or enclosed.\(^4\)

The Pardis is used twice in the Avesta, the book of Zoroastrian, and is composed of two components: first "Pairi" means peripheral and the other "Daeza" means building walls and together means planting trees and flowers around the building. In Pahlavi language this

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word changed to "Paliz" and is also used in Dari Persian. Today, this word is used in Greek in the form of "Paradeisos" means garden and in French as "Paradis" means heaven. In addition, Bagh (garden) is a Persian word that similarly has been used in Pahlavi and Sogdian languages. In Sogdian language as "Baga" which means the piece of land and is synonym with “Baga” in Avesta and "Bhaga" in the Sanskrit. This word has also gone to India and typical Indians call garden as "Baak" and dozens of gardens all around the country are still known with this extension and one of the best examples is the Lal Bagh in Bangalore. It should be noted that heaven means the best life and from the old times in Iran, heaven used to be depicted as a green garden.

Meaning of this word is mentioned in other dictionaries, such as Ghias Al-loghat and Nazem Altaba. Mohammad Ghiyasuddin Rapouri (writers of the nineteenth century) believes Bagh means garden or Roze and said this is a common word in Arabic and Persian and its plural in Arabic is Bighan.5

According to Ali Akbar Khan Nafisi (physician, literary figure and scientist of the twentieth century), in practice, Indians read Bagh as Kaf in Persian and garden was typically an enclosed area, in which flowers, trees, vegetable, greenery, farming and planting takes place.6

According to the Dictionary Synonyms and Antonyms, Garden is synonymous with Bostan, Boostan, Hadigh, Roze, Ferdows (Pardis), Golestan, Golshan and Laleh Zar.7 Throughout history and in different books, instead of the word Bagh other similar words, such as Boostan, Pardis, and Golestan etc. have been used. In fact, what separate the garden from nature is its conceptual and meaning layers, as well as the physical and functional characteristics specific to each and every location.8 In Iran at different periods, garden has been seen from the perspective of heaven and it has been built according to this view during different times.
Latif Abolghasemi, one of the pseudo-modernist Professors of modern architecture has presented numerous definitions of the garden: "garden is a nature derived from the human mind and built by his hand, it is a lush and colourful environment, elegant and refined and based on environmental conditions that in its formation human tastes, skills, culture and his decision has a fundamental role ...." And his other definition of the Persian Garden is:

"Persian Garden is composed of simple and harmonious combination, accurate and stable relationship, considered hierarchies, intellectual logic, geometrical system, regular farming, perpendicular lines, quadrilateral flat plots, balanced divisions, direct pointed passages that are sometimes combined with space openness, directed flowing water network that is developed in both covered and outdoor areas and smiles to the face of sky.” He considers the Persian Garden as beautiful, multi-purpose and a functional work of art.

In the beginning of the Mogul period in India, Gardens were considered as an important component of geographical planning and regional topology, so that it includes the royal palaces or tombs. Wescoat defines garden and its uses as: The term "Bagh=garden" refers to an area that is covered with plants and varies in size from small land to massive royal palaces. Some of the gardens, used to have symmetrical designs, decorative repeated elements, and very tall outer walls, while some others were freely designed around natural springs, meandering streams, typical gardens, and open landscapes.9

In the book a Manifestation wisdom of Persian Garden, the author believes: Some consider "Bagh=garden" common in Persian and Arabic, and some other argue that the term was originally Arabic and its plural is "Bighan", whereas the term is certainly Persian and is taken adapted from Persian to other languages.10

The word Paliz means paradise in the Old Persian. As Ferdowsi said: "Since then he moved towards Paliz." Kowsar is in heaven, with trees, flowers and streams, refreshing water
flows throughout the garden, and beautiful flowers and trees that one can lay down to rest under their shadow, and all this are surrounded by a wall that prevents Infernal to enter.

Heaven is described in the Quran also, as "Ferdows" or "Jannat ". In one instance, Heaven is called "Eram" and it is a paradise that was created on earth. Therefore Iran has a large number of gardens with names of: Eram Garden, Behesht Garden, Garden of Rizwan, Ferdows Garden, Minoo Garden, Ghods garden, Badee' garden, Rafee' garden, Vasee' garden, Jannan Garden, Jannat Garden and Kholdebarin garden, that all of these names refer to heaven.\textsuperscript{11}

Iranian - Islamic thoughts and culture believes earth is Allah's property. Yves Porter, author of Palaces and Gardens of Iran, interprets the hidden thoughts of the Persian Garden as: "Garden and its central Pavilion both are in search of deep meaning of excellence, rich connotation of the human spirit evolution and the dramatic concept of Persian Pardis."\textsuperscript{12}

### 3.2 Beginning of the Garden and Gardening

A plant-based food production system which we can call Forest Gardening is the world's oldest form of gardening. This is originated in prehistoric times along jungle-clad river banks and in the wet foothills of monsoon regions.

The first enclosure which began in 10,000 BC was a type of barrier for the purpose of defending animals, marauders and robbers.

Gardening or garden making was a key precursor to landscape architecture, and it began in West Asia, Mesopotamian and Persia. It is eventually spreading to other parts of the world.

People of Mesopotamia like Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, and Babylonians were urban from about 3,000BC, they know about gardening because some evidence found of their gardens comes from written texts, pictorial sculpture and archaeology. The Garden of Eden and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon are two examples of Primary gardens.
According to the creation story mentioned in Abrahamic religions in the Bible, Torah and Quran, the first man Adam and his wife-Eve lived in the Garden of Eden or earth's Heaven after creation by God. According to the story, its geographic location is relevant to some areas of Havilah, Assyria and Noud, and a river with four branches (Fishun, Oxus, Hadgal, and Euphrates). Many scholars consider that location between the Tigris and Euphrates.

Iran's Prehistoric pottery designs in the 3500 BC, show intense interest in water and productivity. These ancient figures have recorded all water causing elements: mountain, cloud, pond, sedge, water birds and trees that their primary purpose was to receive a favourable response from the powers of heaven. Garden can be easily identified in Samarra pottery works, double intersecting river with birds and trees in each of the four corners. In the metal works of Lorestan (Iran) from around 1000 B.C, we see a tree with running water that was the most desirable scene in a dry land.13

Three customs or rituals are mentioned in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, which can be considered as Aryan mother’s rituals or motherly rites of the Aryan. The first ritual is giving to the poor and needy, which is mentioned in Shahnameh as Frank becomes aware of the Fereydoun Kingdom in Babylon. Second ritual is hospitality; Shahnameh says that after donating to the needy, Frank treated everybody as his guests. And guests (Mehman in Persian) is composed of two words, "Mah" means great and "Man" means house and home. Guest is someone who is religiously and socially considered great in the house, and still today Iranians provide the best seat in the room for their guests and the best and most beautiful rooms are guests rooms and best foods are offered to guests, and even guest should eat first.

Third ritual, Potting and garden; These two rituals, in addition to decorating the house and potting come from the Aryan mother's Creed to Mithraism creed, and then found its way
Chapter 3

Concept and Etymology of the Garden

to Zoroastrianism and then Islam and became one of the religious duties in all of these religions. Since we have little information about Mithraism religion, we could not see any sign of them, but its continuation in Zoroastrianism and Islam itself is a sign that there was no discontinuity in it, especially the word Mehman=guest has retained its meaning.

The most important step of Aryans was Celebrating Mehregan and spread of Mehr Niayesh (love and affection prayer) during that time. But the works that were carried out in the area of governance was spread to house decorating and gardening along with floriculture and planting in the cities. Persians Cypress which is mentioned in books and stories was planted at the same time in cities. From the poetry of Ferdowsi it could be understood that: apart from wild plants, there were plants that bred specifically for the houses and decoration.

on the topic of Iraj mourning in Shahnameh we read that, the Mournful army went to the Iraj garden, where the cypress trees have been mentioned and the same Cypress can be seen in Europe, and later the same with slightly bent shape known as Paisley (Jegheh in Persian) was designed on the Persian Ruler’s hat, and the same was carved in motifs in Persepolis.

Another thing that has been done before planting and growing flowers in cities, is constructing Kariz (subterranean) which is one of the greatest human inventions in the field of irrigation and the world recognizes it from Iran. It is clear that with water improving the undeveloped areas would be possible, and getting water needs digging of canals and subterranean aqueducts, because river shores were already developed due to availability of water, whereas undeveloped remote areas could be improved by these subterranean aqueducts.¹⁴

Garden is a space that man plants flower or trees. Its Ancient Persian form is Bhag which means a section, division or piece of land under cultivation. The development of the garden concept and gardening is a complex topic and no one knows who started it.
In the book of Farsnameh by Ibn al-Balkhi that has been written between 1106 to 1116 A.D, according to ancient narrations pre-Islamic dynasties are described as four dynasties called Pishdadian, Kayanids, Parthian and Sassanian.

The author of this book believes the seventh Pishdadi king, Manouchehr son of Mishkhoryar is the first person in the world to build gardens and writes: "He is the one who made the first garden, he collected various types of basil from mountains and plains and then planted them and ordered to construct four walls all around it and named it as Boostan=Garden meaning the mine of pleasant smell." 

3.3 Garden – Monument

Generally when a monument built in the center of a garden, concept of that garden, based upon the usage of monument. In Persian style of garden, these monuments are in the form of residential and tomb. In Iran most of monument-gardens are residential in the form of palace garden and pavilion garden but in India tomb garden is the most favourite pattern of monument gardening.

Many rich and upper class people, used to build their residential buildings in a garden in order to create favourable conditions for their residence. Some of them are residential and other is governmental garden. It can be seen also, in the form of residential – governmental garden. The origin of tomb garden and palace garden is back to the ancient times and Achaemenian period. The best examples of these types of gardens are in Pasargade which will explain in next chapter. In mythological sources such as Shahnameh, referred to tomb gardens in ancient Iran. Descriptions of Shahnameh are similar to physical feature of Cyrus the Great tomb. This tomb is constructed above the ground in the center of a garden and was visible from distance.

According to historical and archaeological evidence, first tomb garden in Iran was established in Pasargadae for Cyrus the Great.
Chapter 3

Concept and Etymology of the Garden

After Islam, architects in garden designing Contemplated the concept of paradise and therefore most of garden monuments of this era are tomb gardens. Especially from Safavid period, the form of tomb garden became popular in Iran and then in India under Mogul ruler ship. These gardens were symbol of respect to the buried person in the tomb. Gradually pilgrims, travellers and some people using these gardens as recreation center. In this type of monument gardens, the interior parts are peaceful and quiet when the exterior parts insisting on green area and Nature. In India also most of garden – monuments are tomb garden because they believed, these gardens are Simulated of Paradise.

3.4 The Persian Garden in other places of the world

The Persian Garden is one of the major achievements and unique aspects of Iranian culture and is not limited only within the borders of Iran and even entered the spheres of Iranian civilization and Islamic civilization.

What gives a unique value to the identity of this achievement is its presence in the history of the civilization of Iran. Due to the Arab invasion of Iran and forced migration of Sassanid refugees to other parts of the world like China and Japan in the 650s A.D, it spread the influence of Persian Garden to the Far East in the Sassanid period and afterwards. However, its earlier impacts before that time cannot be rejected.

After the arrival of Islam in Iran, gardens were built inspired by the Delgosha gardens of Persia, which were decorated gardens to be a sign of heaven, and a source of peace and happiness for believers. These gardens which have been spread in the Islamic lands from Damascus to Andalusia in Spain and Granada are all subjected to a similar type of spatial structure.

Persian Gardens have always been designed in conflict with desert and love for Persian Garden derived from fear of the desert, because in the mind of an Iranian, desert evokes death, barren desert, thirst, and residence of jinns and demons.
From the impact of the Persian Garden on the ancient Greeks during the Achaemenid period, Spartan Admiral Lysander's observations, quoted from Xenophon in the Economicus book, Pythagoras, from gardens around the Cyrus palace in Sardis and Socrates praising Cyrus and his gardens could be noted. The Arab conquerors of Iran were enchanted by the beauty of the Persian Garden. Therefore they changed their lifestyle from Bedouin to a permanent establishment in the centre of the state, used the same concept in the form of a courtyard garden, garden in the garden and desert garden, of which Al-Ukhaidir palace - 40 kilometres from Karbala – in the 9th century A.D., Bou-I- Qawra palace near Samarra in the ninth century A.D, and Alhambra palace in Granada in fourteenth century A.D are good examples.16

Gardens of the Alhambra represent a multi-threaded culture of the Andalusian civilization in southern Spain and pictures a brilliant century of Islamic art and culture in European countries. In the beautiful city of Granada, in southern Spain, in the dry, warm and dehydrated region, we suddenly are faced with gardens and palaces that have no relationship with the geography of the region. The historians have different opinions on the constructive history of the Alhambra Palace, but what is clear is, it was a vibrant and lively place from the beginning of the fourteenth century A.D.

The entrance of one of the palaces called Qomariyah, guides visitors to the large and small cohesive design of gardens. Hall of Ambassadors and capital of King Joseph I, Hall of blessing and Riahin yard (plants) also known as the pond garden (Alberca) and a large pond with rows of trees surrounding it. Ponds, like a mirror that reflects the surrounding architecture on its surface. But among all, one garden has a special and wonderful place. It is called Jannat Al-Arif that its construction dates back to the early fourteenth century. Jannat Al-Arif which means artist's paradise, was designed and built under the influence of the
Persian Gardens in the early fourteenth century and is one of the nicest gardens built in the style of Persian Gardens which is known abroad and has remained till date.

Archaeological investigations show that Jannat Al-Arif is a summer residential garden. In the heart of the garden the Sagheih courtyard with its long but not too wide design showcases a unique expression of the art of garden construction. Water in the gardens of the Alhambra is not simply used for watering plants and trees; instead it multiplies the dimensions of Belvederes and palaces by their reflection in the pools filled with water. In fact, an integrated system has been used in order to enhance the internal space of the palace.

Marianne Barrucand, in the book of Islamic architecture in Andalusia, writes: "These landscapes resemble the paradise mentioned in the Quran with gardens, fountains, pavilions where the rivers flows through them."

Will Durant in his book The Story of Civilization writes: Persian-style garden has been imitated by other nations and even among Muslims and Arabs and also become increasingly popular in India and in medieval times has inspired Europeans.

During the Islamic period (in Iran), large gardens were surrounding the palaces and architecturally was considered to be part of it. So that large gardens symmetrically covers all around the main building. The Pavilions are built at the intersection points. The Palace was placed at the intersection of two streets, water channels as a crossover passes through it, and thus vast landscape was created in the framework of water streams. Entire area was divided into rectangular parts that small stream is passes through them. All kinds of trees had been planted that certainly character in planting every tree was organized precisely and consistently. In the ninth and tenth centuries the legendary caliphs in Baghdad and Samarra, by following their Iranian predecessors made similar gardens.17

In the Timurid period due to the fact that Timor was fascinated by gardens, he ordered large gardens to be built adjacent to the cities. The main features of gardens were
made by Timor are: large areas, creating decorations on the walls around the garden, large pools etc. In fact, Timor identically copied a large number of Iranian gardens and made similar gardens in Samarkand. During the Timor period, two famous writers Ibn Arabshah and Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi recorded valuable information about the gardens built by Timur. In the book Zafarnama by Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, he writes: Timor called all the artisans and craftsmen from the Parsi Kingdom to Samarkand. Elite engineers and architects from across the Persian kingdom, Iraq and Azerbaijan Dar-o-Salaam and other countries had gathered in Dar-o-Saltaneh (Samarkand).

Timur built gardens in Samarkand of the same name that existed in Shiraz. The famous gardens of Samarkand were Eram Garden, Shomal Garden, JahanNama Garden, Takht-e-Gharache Garden, Deraz Garden, Delgosha Garden, Chenar Garden, Behesht Garden and Naghsh-e-Jahan Garden. Timur also built the same gardens in cities such as Soltanieh, Baghdad and Damascus.

Most of the Iranian cities in the comparative period in medieval Europe were full of lush and beautiful gardens and therefore cities like Isfahan, Shiraz and Qazvin had a great beauty and freshness that used to impress the European travellers. During the Renaissance in Europe, when garden construction was at its peak, Persian Gardens had their amazing impact on Western tourists.

In Eastern countries too garden styles were affected by Persian Gardens. Babur Shah, the first king of the Mogul period in India, implemented Iranian gardens and garden decoration style in India of which the Agra gardens in northern India can be mentioned. Jahangir the successors of Babur also created gardens in Kashmir that remain the most famous gardens of the east. (Map 1)

At a time when Europe was struggling to revive their lost civilization after the fall of the Roman Empire, Spaniards had a rich and quiet life under the command of the Moors,
Muslim people of northwest Africa who dominated Spain from the year 700 to 1492 A.D and influenced that country by their culture. Therefore in this period many fancy and recreational gardens were built. Impact of this garden style can still be seen in Alhambra gardens in Granada that was built in the fourteenth century. This palace has four gardens built in the eastern style garden. The mentioned smaller gardens were constructed as rooms outside the palace.
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