

## Identifying Ethical Components to Achieve Suitable Pattern for Contemporary Architecture of Islamic Iran

Shahram Sattarifard

Department of Architecture, Islamic Azad University, Khalkhal Branch, Khalkhal, Iran

**Abstract:** Reaching mental peace is one of the main considering obsessions and anxiety in life. The presence of a shelter in which human reaches mental peace is one of the certainties in human society. The more compatible the shelter and places in which human meets his routine needs with human spirit and nature, the more complete the resulting peace. Ethics as one of the criteria and indices for recognition of human dimensions has expanded in many artistic sciences and branches and theorists believe that ethics or adherence to principles of eternality of eternity secret of architectural works, science, etc., following the ethical and human principles and creation of virtues in humans in all cultures is one of the ideal goals and many philosophers, mystics and theologians have tried to create value system and its ethical principles so that formation of spirit of generosity and courage has led to formulation of some traditions, code of ethics and codified principles in practical philosophy. Architecture is not far from ethics and observing public rules of Islamic ethics such as justice, honesty, obligation, values, neighborhood right, hospitality etc., has been considered in traditional spatial and architectural structure of Iran. In this research, attempt was made to take step to resolve the crisis of social relations among humans by looking at role of quality of architectural design in revival of social capital in today's society of Iran which is faced with serious crisis (by highlighting role of architectural ethical design) based on Iranian Islamic pattern and ethical components in architectural design have been utilized with reliance on Iranian Islamic pattern and architectural pattern based on documentary and library method.

**Key words:** Ethics, individual and social, architectural pattern, Iranian Islamic, method

---

### INTRODUCTION

Studying ethics in architecture requires recognizing what ethics is from two perspectives and also recognizing nature of architecture. Although, traditional architects have regarded this profession as a sacred art and transferred principles of professional ethics chest by chest, expansion of professional offences which were committed by the persons with high educational degrees and social responsibilities in recent years has doubled importance of dealing with subject of professional ethics and particularly architectural ethics. Sustainable forms of architecture protect human history, culture and civilization and in this regard, an important part of judgments made by the next generations about ethics of societies will relate to architecture of that land. Architectural actors in the world have long studied role of ethics in architecture and in this regard, they have taken advantage of views of philosophers and jurists. Architecture has undeniable effects on different human fields such as culture, psychology, sociology etc., failure to observe ethical principles in design and implementation of architectural buildings irreparably damaged body and mind of humans.

At the same time, any architect as a specialist is obliged to observe principles of professional ethics. Research and obligation of professional ethics and more specifically, engineering ethics have been considered in recent decades especially in developed countries but few researches have been conducted on architectural ethics considering its special differences from other engineering fields particularly in Iran. In this writing, similarities of different schools have been taken into account to prepare a useful pattern for formulating an ethical coordinated system in architecture, ethics philosophy. Interactions of ethics and architecture have been described as global values. Effect of traditional and new architectural system and modeling of traditional architecture have been mentioned in architectural ethics and at the end, some architectural spaces and maifestation of ethics in them are discussed.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method is of descriptive analytical type. To conduct the study, common methods of information collection including documentary or field method have

**Table 1: Comparison of criteria and components of ethics in people**

| Unethical  | Ethical   | Results                            |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Confronting with working issues and affairs  | Confronting with working issues and affairs                     | Conduct                            |
| Easy, difficult, benefit Suitable, unsuitable  | Easy, difficult, benefit suitable, unsuitable                   | Reasonable and logical             |
| Untrue action should be recognized   |   |                                    |
| Highly profitable, lowly profitable, easy,difficult, familiar, strange , reputation, anonymity | Good, bad true, untrue conscious, unconscious Interest, benefit | Ethical                            |
| Performing action as the person desires  | Performing an action for the sake of God and legitimate benefit | True action should be recognized   |
| Performing an action if it is profitable   |   |                                    |
| Not performing an action in case of loss   |   |                                    |
| Not performing an action if it is profitable for society but not profitable for the person     | Not at all  | Untrue action should be recognized |

been used. In library studies section, theoretical fundamentals of the subject were studied and concept of ethics and its criteria in design and architecture were extracted and discussed from books of thinkers, theorists and Islamic verses and nations.

**Philosophy of ethics:** Ethics is a set of meanings and characteristics which are fixed in the inner part of human through which behavior is shown good or bad in his view and for this reason, person takes action regarding it or avoids performing it (Ghazali, 1995). Ethics is thought relative by some people and absolute by some others. Ethics means carnal characteristics of human including virtues and vices (Motahari, 1999). The person who is ethical will acquire ethical attribute that is what causes a person to take an ethical action in special conditions unconsciously and conditionally such as generosity and telling lie (Motahari, 1999). The eastern and western great men and theorists have similarities and differences in its definition. In general, fundamental issues of ethics are described as follows: truth and untruth of affairs, distinction between good and bad or distinction of virtues. In religious affairs, the subject of ethics lexically and semantically refers to moods, states and qualities in soul which have turned into a habit and stuck into the minds and finally affected behavior of human and endow society and person with special aspect bad or good.

Ethics in Islam has three elements) soul purification, emancipation of a slave after his master’s death) Islam regards ethics as carnal states fixed in soul and introduces ethical values as life requirements of a prosperous society irrespective of religious aspect (Sadat, 1989). Regarding ethics islam calls people to pure life which should be spent for prosperity of person. Pure life includes content, pure worship, pure life and legitimate livelihood. In fact islamic ethics is a set of all ethical titles particularly ethics which is connected to Islam world and Islamic culture.

Ethics has close relationship with values and is regarded as a tool which converts values into action. Ethics means observance of spiritual principles and

values which govern person or the group’s behavior to see what is right and wrong (Daft, 1995). Ethics includes some concepts such as trust, honesty, truth, fulfillment of obligation toward others, justice, equality and citizenship virtues and serving society. Ethics meaning correct distinction between the right and wrong has been discussed by the philosophers and has been regarded as one of the branches of philosophy. In addition, some persons such as Hike regard ethics as factor of civilization. Most ethical criteria and rules in a culture vary in different cultures and are different at different times (Lawton, 2002). In other words, ethical relativity leads us to regard a case which is correct in a society as incorrect and increase ambiguity and sometimes conflict in values. Relativity or absoluteness of ethics is one of the problems in discussion made among ethical philosophers. Islamic philosophers have criticized relativity of ethics. The late Allameh Tabatabaee criticizes theory of ethics relativity: it is true that the views of people in different communities are different in recognition of good and bad and there are many traits which are regarded good by a community but regarded bad by another community but there is no difference of opinion due to necessity of following principles of virtues and avoiding ethical vices but all differences are found in instances (Mohsen, 1991).

The late Motahari also says: we can say that ethical actions are relative but what relates to ethics means human mood and virtue which includes philanthropy and interest in destiny of humans which cannot be regarded relative (Table 1) (Motahari, 1983).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Architecture in ethical context:** Ethics and its components are the words which have been highlighted in religious teachings. In dictionaries, similar meanings have been mentioned for the word “ethics”. On this basis, the word akhlagh is plural form of “kholgh” and “khoo” and literally means concepts of habits, inherent nature, inner nature, good behavior and generosity. Ethics has

Table 2: Components of dimensions of architect's ethics in Islamic society

| Ethical level of architect | Applied components at different levels                                  | Expected final results due to attention to ethical dimensions in Islamic society  |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
|                            |   | Successful criterion  | Unsuccessful criterion  |
| Individual                 | Human, Muslim and adhering to human and religious principles            | A respectful human and pious person individually and socially   | An ordinary and ineffective person for him and society  |
| Family                     | Responsible for growth and protection and training of family members    | and creator of a permanent artistic work, functional  | and suffering person due to lack of suitable definition of identity and religion and as a result, creator of an |
| Profession                 | Artist and responsible for people mentally and meeting need for shelter | and based on living condition of the people in society and the person who is religiously and personally trusted and adds value to religious norms | architectural work, inefficient, meaningless, forgotten   |
| Society                    | A member of large society and responsible for serving the country       |   |   |

close relation with values and is regarded as tool which converts values into action. Ethics means observing spiritual principles and values which govern person or the group's behavior to see what is right and wrong (Daft, 1995). Ethics as a factor affected by culture of society has considerable effect on spatial structure of traditional houses of Iran. Islamic ethics is a set of ethical issues and particularly ethics which is attributed to Islamic world and Islamic culture irrespective of its similarities to ethics in other fields (Nazidizaji *et al.*, 2010).

Following ethical and human principles and creating virtues in humans in all cultures are among the ideal goals and many philosophers, mystics and mystics and theologians have tried to create value system and its ethical principles so that formation of spirit of generosity and courage has led to formulation of some traditions, code of ethics and codified principles in practical philosophy (Moosavi, 2011). Architecture is not far from ethics and observing public rules of Islamic ethics such as justice, honesty, obligation, values, neighborhood right, hospitality etc. has been considered in traditional spatial and architectural structure of Iran. Many factors and elements have played determining role in formation of traditional houses of Iran. Among them, one of the factors which have had determining role in its formation was factor of culture. Rapaport believes that factor of culture and human's perception of the world and life which include religious beliefs, social structure, tribe, family, lifestyle and also social communication method of the people play effective role in house and its spatial divisions organization (Masaeli, 2009).

In traditional architecture and among the Muslim masons, spiritual and ethical manual has been common which is known as code of ethics. This code of ethics which forms ethical characteristics of different jobs has been derived from Quranic verses and words of the Prophet (PBUH) and the imams and other religious great men. Therefore, they are obliged to observe it ethically and they protected their professional honor (Khan and Abari, 1992).

Architecture has direct effect on spirit, mind and culture of people and society due to special nature and

multilateral effect of environment and the space designed by architect and is one of the main professions related to ethical concepts. Ethics is rooted in all principles of traditional architecture and one can infer from its effect. In the past, architectural principles along with knowledge and insight was transferred from the professor to student chest by chest and this training with religious and ethical teachings can be received from architectural thesis, architectural professional ethics, masons code of ethics, code of ethics for guilds and other writings. Behavior of humans consciously or unconsciously manifested ideas and ideals or their thoughts and beliefs in creation of architectural work and characteristic of Islamic art which has accompanied matching between this profession and art and spirit of Islam, i.e., monotheism (Nadimi, 1995). Ethical and spiritual characteristics of traditional architectural teachings can be regarded as a pattern for codifying Islamic spiritual and ethical principles in architectural profession and this has the highest effects on Islamic society (Table 2).

Ethics in traditional architecture explains ethical responsibilities of this profession and art in the following four dimensions individual dimension as a Muslim, family dimension as a breadwinner of family and trainer of children) profession dimension as an artist) social dimension as a member of large serving and industrial society in the country with long national and religious ambitions. Such profession thinks about spiritual utility of the work and responsibility for social, historical, natural tradition and center of all of them, i.e., the Omnipotent God (Noghreh *et al.*, 2009). Traditional architecture has tried to embody meaning in itself. The architect tried to manifest human attributes in building as a live and eternal being.

The courtyard and external sanctum is the place of magnificence, it doesn't deprive the residents of peace and tranquility, endows permanent peace. The privacy is clear. Obligation and belief that others have right and other cases observed in the past architectural ethical principles which all showed evidence have moralism of the past architecture. Once, the professor had selected his student if he was interested in it. That he was interested

has thousands meanings one of which is ethical principles (Nadimi, 1995). Ethics is manifested where man knocking at the special door for men shows that Iranian man is a person who has human ethics. He enters vestibule, then Miansara and other spaces. All of these stages are transformation of ethics. The aim is to banish evil and value the good.

**Architecture and area of ethical being:** Aim of the Islamic ethics is to convey the human soul to the last human horizons. The main basis of Islamic ethics is to attract attention of human to his inner honor and prestige (Javadi, 2006). Doctrinal, worshipping and ethical training supervises on individual and social readiness in realization of doctrinal, worshipping and ethical dignity related to pure life. Architect has two physical and spiritual dimensions line other humans as areas of the spiritual being and he achieves higher doctrinal and ethical ranks by observing ethical sensual principles. These areas of being include these dimensions) human cognitive area (which is his epistemological and cognitive aspect and he evolves by nurturing reason and thought); voluntary area of human (which reminds him of his will in his decision-making) (one of the valuable criteria of human which distinguished between him and animals is power of choice) emotional area of human (this area has two dimensions of emotional reason and love for thinking and each of these two dimensions plays role in movement and elevation.

Professional ethics is the ethical responsibility of person toward profession. An architect has ethical responsibility as a natural person but his professional responsibility results from a profession which he has assumed. An important ethical part of person depends on their profession. Architecture which observes ethical principles in different parts of profession is always involved in the subjects which challenge him and his profession. Some subjects such as (evil) pride which accompanies selfishness in actions and regarding other's views as unimportant, (good) seeing God as supervisor of one's actions and spending one's life for society and people toward whom he feels responsible as far as there is time to discuss devotion and sacrifice for fellow-creature (Agha and Merdad, 2013). Human behaviors which originate from observance of ethical principles and rules in his life are interpreted as an element called motivation.

**Contrast of ethics and rationalism in modern architecture:** Although, rationalism is an ominous phenomenon, rationalism is not good without considering

ethical components. In idea-based and modern rationalistic architecture, social ethics is not completely observed and a person makes decision for a group of decision makers. Any community and group have moral etiquette, conduct and characteristic considering their cultural fields (Tabatabaee and Motaharri, 2002) and there will be no manifestation of ethical architecture but by recognizing them and respecting for them. In fact, this action will make people responsible for norms of society and selfishness which shows itself is the opposite of rationalism. Prevailing rationalism and separation of people from ethical affairs caused societies to accept the essential meaning of life as technological life and it has been apparently converted into main aspect and the current problem of developed societies is to obtain a new apparent aspect with which they can show them (Lippmann, 1982).

Ethical thinkers and theorists believed that attention to rationalism and selfishness were accompanied by degradation of spirituality and morality and semantic isolation and semantic and faith-oriented manifestations and this has been shown in architectural works which have been obtained from this thought.

When selfishness and rationalism are suggested absolutely and irrespective of spiritual life affairs in social and particularly architectural fields, semantics will be withdrawn and instead, materialism will be expanded which will start social deviations and abnormalities. This subject will be discussed as far as architecture will be created for people with common moral characters in which request of person will be preferred to request of society and feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity will be manifested in the created building and no cultural and social relation can be recognized as the architectures which select name of a postal card and pay attention to worldly material pleasures (Pirnia, 2008). In postal card architecture, only shell is important and no effort is made to change the inner par and this is the starting point of separation from fundamental meaning of architecture and there is fear that such route should be travelled to use technology in architecture and this difficulty will not be overcome but by avoiding limitless selfishness of human soul. Soul which is composed of spirit and recognition of spiritual things can be equipped with element of morality as one of the most important symbols of social norms not for creation of new architectural space with morality but for creation of the space which is available and should return to its place (Table 3).

**Ethical norms in Iranian Islamic architecture:** Any person who lives in society should be aware of the social traditions and norms and observe them. Norms of each

Table 3: Acquiring Islamic ethics considering ethical components

| Ethical result                           | Performance result                 | Performance                                    | Component of ethics                          | Type of ethics    |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Divine nearness                          | Regarding the affairs divine       | Belief in origin and resurrection              | Perfection and happiness                     | Divine ethics     |
| Virtue                                   | Power to distinguish vices ethical | Attention to good act                          | Intention and motivation                     | Purification      |
| Human dignity                            | Forgiveness and dignity            | Faith and virtue on top of the affairs         | Respect for beliefs                          | Personal ethics   |
| Brotherhood                              | Strengthening social relations     | Purification                                   | Sociability                                  | Social ethics     |
| Knowing the general and special sciences | Thinking human                     | Attention to substantial sciences and creation | Attention to nature and identity of sciences | Scientific ethics |

society are composed of two classes as behavioral norms (social ethics versus individual ethics) and social life traditions and arts. Norms are the behavioral affairs which have been deemed proper by the ethical rational and canonical criteria and the society observes them in social behaviors and respects for them (Sadat, 1989). Among them, there are affairs which human needs for strengthening social relations and influencing society. These affairs can be regarded as more delicate behaviors with delicate and sensitive points. They are not easily seen and they are hardly identified.

One of the respectful aspects in Islamic ethics is respect for the elders particularly the experienced people. In Iranian traditional architecture, there were platforms beside portal of house to be a place for the experienced people to take a rest and a shelter for the passers-by to be protected against the climatic conditions due to roof of the portal and the platforms for the elders and it is real manifestation of morality in a small and simple sample of architectural space. Ethical traditions and characteristics and observing them are in fact manifestation of social norms which have been shown in work of the artists and architects of a society as one of the most effective people in emotional and intellectual growth and mental and aesthetic subjects of people. Therefore, it is observed that ethical dimensions for the architect in the past was attention to all dignities and we don't mean that this trend should be followed but the aim should be to model the ethical components in architecture based on modern technologies and technology should not cause omission of the ethical components.

**Some architectural spaces and manifestation of ethics in them:** House is the place where we reside to achieve peace and comfort (Beheshti, 1997). This definition of house is valuable in terms of ethical and human effects. Such definition makes construction of house very complex because it regards house as a factor of evolution, elevation and comfort of human. House is a place in which person can be far from pressures and limitations of society against climatic factors. House is a place for the person to take a rest and mental peace (Morteza, 2008). This definition of house is valuable in terms of ethical and human effects as the Quran says in verse 80 of Al-Nahl

sura: And Allah has given you a place to abide in your houses. This definition of house makes construction of house very complex because it regards house as factor of evolution, elevation and comfort and difference between house and dormitory and shelter is shown in such human- making and spiritual effects.

**Sunshade:** Sunshade literally means hall, indoor corridor and a ceiling below which there is way to house. One of the evident characteristics of urbanization and traditional architecture of Iran is its alleys and indoor sidewalks which are called sunshade. Aim of designing and implementing sunshade is to protect the heat stricken human under its shade against sunshine. The sunshades are established such that the pedestrian stands in a suitable sequence in space of shade along his movement direction. In many entrance sunshades, there are many houses which are also important for increasing sense of neighborhood and district association. It can be said that sunshades were the shades which were constructed in front of the entrance door to protect guests against sun and heat and not to injure them until the hosts arrive and open the door (Pirnia, 2005).

**Portal:** Portal of the luxurious houses and niches opposite to it invited any person inside the house. On top of the portal, there were some verses of the Holy Quran with religious terms such as the holy verse of "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" so that, the residents pass below the Quranic verses or religious narrations and terms when they enter and exit. On the portal, tile or marble inscriptions in different forms and with implications of the Quranic verses and narrations, name of five persons, name of founder, date of construction and number 7 were embedded to protect the residents against Satan and evil eyes when they exit from their house.

**Platforms in front of door:** The platforms beside the portal which are called pakhoreh were used for the guests who wanted to speak with the host and didn't want to enter the house to sit (the same). The platforms on entrance of the residential houses were indicative of respect for hospitality tradition in Iranian culture.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings show that ethics has been one of the important components in architecture of Iran. The presence of the written and verbal historical documents such as code of ethics of the masons proves this statement. Similar culture of architect and people leads to honest architecture and this honesty of architect gives eternal life to these buildings and houses, markets, mosques and the like had become place for expression of the ethics of architects. Study and identification of nature of ethics and culture are effective steps for increasing qualitative value of architecture. Since the world is making progress through technology, its framework in architectural profession is necessary and this can be possible by recognizing ethical components and necessities of technology and the necessary procedure can be obtained in training of the architect. Dimensions of technology should be redefined for the contemporary architect to apply technology in his profession by observing ethical criteria and social norms purposefully.

Ethics in architecture has had special place among Iranians and Iranian people have used the Quranic verses islamic narrations and other resources. On the other hand, ethics has been manifested in architecture of the traditional houses of Iran and this can be clearly observed in different dimensions of spatial structure such as sunshade, entrance portal, vestibule, yard, guest rooms etc. in spatial structure of the traditional houses of Iran, attention has been paid to respect for guest in sensible manner. Respect for guest, hospitality and special space for him in Iranian houses can be deliberated and studied. The creation world with its natural wonderful architecture directs us to the Unique Creator of mankind. We also tried to construct spaces and buildings during history to worship God. Architecture had been temple which had main role in architecture of all tribes and human civilizations before history up to now. The great ancient temples and buildings such as Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat, Ur etc. to Kaaba and Jerusalem and not mosques, temples churches and synagogues play important role in inviting followers and followers of religions and attracting them to worship God.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To reach architectural space with ethics and considering updated demands, it is necessary for the architect to observe artistic and ethical constructions:

- Continual effort to promote spiritual and ethical dimensions in architectural profession and the presence of architect

- Self-knowledge and other-knowledge in responding to needs of people
- Continual effort to purify self and improve the working and professional affairs
- A continual effort to bring Islamic ethics and religion effectively to all working and professional dimensions
- Recognizing, protecting and improving traditions, norms and values of society through Islamic criterion system
- Recognizing Islamic culture and civilization and showing it for creating effect of architectural space considering the present and future needs of society
- Masking effort to promote common Islamic Iranian dimensions of human through which category of identity is manifested

Observing these principles by architect creates a result based on social norms, culture and ethics by aligning technology with these principles. In this case, it can be said that the resulting architectural space originates from Islamic ethical principles which have been updated with modern technology. In this way, person reaches a modern space which is familiar with his moods from a tiring modern space which is strange to him and he no longer spends his life in that space but he lives his life in that space.

## REFERENCES

- Agha, S. and Merdad, 2013. Code of ethics for architecture, fourteen principles of professional ethics of architecture and urban development. *Firoozeh Eslam*, 1: 69-90.
- Beheshti, S.M., 1997. House and Iranian culture. *Abadi*, 55: 120-123.
- Daft, R.L., 1995. *Organization Theory and Design*. 5th Edn., West Publishing, Co., San Francisco, CA., USA.
- Ghazali, I.M., 1995. *Revival of Religious Sciences*. Vol. 3, Darolfekr Publication, Beirut, Lebanon.
- Javadi, A.A., 2006. *Ethics Fundamentals in the Quran*. Vol. 10, Asra Publication, Qom, Iran.
- Khan, M. and A. Abari, 1992. Code of ethics for masons. *Safeh*, 5: 10-15.
- Lawton, A., 2002. *Ethical Management in Governmental Services*. Yekan Publication, Tehran, Iran, Pages: 113.
- Lippmann, W., 1982. *A Peace of Morals*. McMillan Publication, New Jersey, USA.
- Masaali, S., 2009. *Hidden Map as an Achievement of Religious Beliefs in Traditional Desert House of Iran*. Fine Arts Publication, Tehran, Iran.
- Mohsen, B.M., 1991. Divorce and relativity of ethics. *Keihan Andisheh*, 58: 34-34.

- Moosavi, S.R., 2011. Islamic art in mirror of code of ethics with emphasis on code of ethics of masons. *Islamic Art Stud.*, 15: 21-34.
- Morteza, H., 2008. Traditional principles of construction in Islam. Architectural and Urban Development Research Center, Tehran, Iran.
- Motahari, M., 1983. Training in Islam. Alzahra Publication, Tehran, Iran.
- Motahari, M., 1999. Introduction to Islamic Sciences. Sadra Publication, Tehran, Iran.
- Nadimi, H., 1995. Code of ethics and tradition of architects. *Hist. Archit. Urban Dev. Iran*, 1: 448-474.
- Nazidizaji, S., M. Vafamehr and G.A. Keshtkar, 2010. Ethics in architecture. *Ethics Sci. Technol.*, 5: 105-114.
- Noghreh, K., M.H.N. Abdolhamid and A. Froozandeh, 2009. Secret of eternity of architectural works-analyzing modernistic post modernistic and more comprehensive approaches. *Bagh Nazar*, 6: 31-44.
- Pirnia, M., 2008. Stylistics of Iranian Architecture. Soroush Publications, Tehran, Iran.
- Pirnia, M.K., 2005. Familiarity with Iranian Islamic Architecture. Vol. 10, Soroush Danesh, Tehran, Iran.
- Sadat, M.A., 1989. Islamic Erthics. Bahman Ghom Publication, Tehran, Iran.
- Tabatabae, M.H.S. and M. Motaharri, 2002. Principles of Philosophy and Realism. Sadra Publication, Tehran, Iran.