

Persian translation of this paper entitled:
نقش آیین گذار در ساختار کالبدی حمام‌های عمومی ایران
is also published in this issue of journal.

The Role of Rite of Passage in Physical Structure of Iran's Public Baths

Mehrvash Kazemi Shishavan*¹, Mahsa Baybord²

1. Ph.D. in Architecture, Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Architecture, Shabestar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shabestar, Iran.
2. Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Art and Architecture, Shabestar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shabestar, Iran.

Received: 27/06/2018 ; revised: 26/02/2019 ; accepted: 06/04/2019 ; available online: 22/12/2019

Abstract

Problem statement: Hygiene and purification are very important in the religion of Islam. The importance is manifested more in paying attention to a type of architecture namely bathroom. Bathrooms, in addition to physical and material characteristics, have ritualistic and immaterial characteristics and in order to identify them, common physical structure of public should be studied. Of course, it should be noted that these structural patterns in architecture and particularly in traditional architecture have direct relationships with building functions and in fact, any building is constructed for special function and with a pattern appropriate to it.

One of the main functions of bathroom is to perform rituals of purification and according to most researchers; rituals of the purification are of rites of passage. Now the question arises that what role did rite of passage play in the physical structure of Iranian public baths?

Research objectives: The present study has emphasized to find the effect of rites of passage on basic pattern of Iranian public baths. The results of the present study show that the three-part structure of rites of passage was considered as an inspirational concept in the design architecture of the bathroom.

Research method: In order to study the role of rite of passage in physical structure of Iran's public baths in accordance with the research requirements, while using the logical reasoning based investigation, historical interpretation method is also used. The research data have been gathered via library resources and documentary studies.

Conclusion: Iranian baths have three-part structure including a Bineh (caldarium), a mediator (middle corridor) and a hot chamber (tepidarium) and purification as the main function of bathhouses reflects the rite of passage. In general, rite of passage has three separate, purgatory and reintegration stages and this three-stage spiritual journey can be seen in bathing customs and purification rituals. The results of the present study show that three-part structure of passage is likely the inspired concept of traditional structure in architectural design of bathhouse and the use of three-part structure in its body.

Keywords: Hammam, Bathhouse, Purification, Rite of Passage.

* Corresponding author: 09141165748, m.kazemi@iaushab.ac.ir

Introduction and statement of problem

The worldviews of the present age are that all intellectual currents and worldviews are derived from society. Yet in traditional societies this is totally different. That means worldview and spiritual flow create social forms and faces. These forms are a reflection of beliefs that are decisive factor in traditional societies. The world is considered supernatural in traditional society. Therefore, the reasons for constructing and utilizing a building can be explained by considering that supernatural values that the traditional human pay attention for it.

Doubtless in every culture and historical period, "Public spaces" with their diversity and specific functions were created in accordance with the cultural and social needs of their society. Thus human artistic achievements contain a collection of common cultural symbols and signs in the society in which they live. These common and repeatable elements are combined as fixed patterns, in different shapes, and form the conceptual aspect of the architecture. Accordingly, the architectural body is the result of the continuous line of human thinking from the past to the time of its creation. As a result, in order to understand architecture in traditional societies, we need to explore and recognize ancient patterns that have contributed to the creation of such bodies.

The objective of this study is to identify the influence of the rite of passage in the architecture design of the Iranian public baths. As a meaningful element, the basic structure and fundamental pattern of the baths should be examined and the reasons for using such a pattern with respect to the function of the building are investigated.

Many scholars have emphasized the viewpoint of traditional value that has an immaterial value in traditional people. Therefore, considering the bath as a cleansing area, whose main function is purification, and believing that the space hierarchy of a building is related to the function of the

building, then the hypothesis of the influence of the ritual of purity on bath architecture can be examined. From the point of view of jurisprudence and Islamic law, cleansing - as one of the important functions of the bath - is the start of purification. These functions, according to most researches, are related to the rite of passage. Rites of passage in all religions make a significant contribution to the life of religious people. These rituals, all over the world, consisting of three parts structure called separation, transition and reconnection (Kottak, 2007, 663-658). The term rite of passage, which describes a spatial ritual rite, was first used by the Belgian humanist Arnold Van Gennep (1957-1873). Gennep believes various factors like difference in age and occupation and progress from one group to another, along with special actions such as marriage, funerals, puberty rituals, entering into secret societies or reaching to ritual positions cause rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960, 2-4). In the Islamic rites and rules, the purification ritual that before religious and ritual ceremonies done, also represent the rite of passage because the individual by doing that prepares for spiritual transformation.

Theoretical fundamentals and research background

A few researches have been conducted on Iranian baths that are not comprehensive due to lack of the resources. One of the researches is Farhad Fakhar Tehrani's article entitled "Bath in the View of Time", which has been published in 30th volume of the *Soffeh* Scientific Journal publication on 2000 (pages 94-105). Fakhar Tehrani briefly describes the historical trend of bath formation and considers Iranian public baths in relation to Roman baths and under the influence of Mithraism religion. Also, Tabasi, Ansari, Fakhar Tehrani and Tavousi (2007) in an article entitled "Recognition of the Physical Characteristics of Iranian Bathhouse in the Safavid Period" examined the physical similarities of the Safavid Baths. Other researches

on baths are as a collection of articles of the first bath seminar that was held in 2003 by Fakhar Tehrani. Also published articles in the *Ketab Mah Honar* journal in June and July 2003, and some master's theses of the restoration field students are also among this category. Most researches have an ancient look at the subject and emphasize the physical and material aspects of the bathroom. Some have also looked historical and studied the process of general history.

Unfortunately, inadequate researches are more perceptible on the conceptual and immaterial aspects of the bathroom architecture, and the impact of the findings of the studies on bath architecture has not been studied and the researches have anthropological view rather than architectural. Among these studies, we can refer to the article "Bath and bathing in the Iranian culture of the Qajar era" that author has addressed the social aspects of the bath.

In the book *Public Baths in Yesterday Society, Culture and Literature*, Rouh Al-Amini has studied the social and cultural aspects of the bath with regard to literary and historical texts. Limited research has been done on essence of rite of passage and its role in the field of culture, including the articles "Transformation and changing recognition existence at the rite of passage" with the topic of recognition of the rite of passage and "The Study of the Henna rite from Long ago up to Now" in *The popular culture and literature magazine* on the relation of the Henna rite with the rite of passage. Also, the book *Rites of Passage in Iran* examines the social customs associated with the rite of passage from anthropological point of view and notes that some of these rituals were carried out in the bath.

Method of research

In order to summarize the history of purification, bathroom functions and bathing practices in Iranian-Islamic baths correctly, various historical texts such as histories, diaries, narratives and hadiths should be carefully studied. Hence, the

type of information of this research will be of a historical nature. Collecting necessary information is through library resource studies. Considering the research requirements, the method of logical reasoning along with the historical interpretative method has been used and the content analysis method has been used to conclude.

Discussion

• The three-part structure of public baths in Iran

According to the most scholars in the field of architectural historiography, public baths in Iran consist of three main parts of the Bineh and the main door and hot chamber (Kiani, 2007, 249), and observing this spatial hierarchy and the course of movement from the Bineh to the hot chamber are similar in the public baths of Iran (Tabasi et al., 2007, 49-58).

The archaeological evidence of the Safavid and the Qajar periods clearly illustrates the use of the three-part structure in Iranian baths. Also, the limited archaeological evidence that is prior to the Safavid period indicates clearly using the three-part pattern in the architecture of the Iranian baths, which according to the limited evidence of archeology before the Safavid period, only two examples of the Seljuk and Timurid periods is in the Table 1. In this table, examples of different periods's baths plans have been collected and three-part structure and spatial hierarchy have been studied. Due to the large number of baths in the Safavid and Qajar periods, only a sample of famous baths has been examined.

According to Table 1, it can be concluded that the use of a three-part pattern (including Bineh, mediator and hot chamber) by traditional architects in the architecture design of baths in different periods of architecture from the era of Buyid (Lotfivand Vahid, 2010) dynasty to the Qajar period is common and acceptable. The three-part pattern has been the fundamental structural pattern of public baths in Iran. In addition, the text documents also indicate

Table 1. Examining the Three-part structure of Iranian public baths. Source: authors.

Building	Plan	Structure and main pattern of design
Bishabor 's Bath (Al-e-buyid and Saljuke period)		
Semnan's Bath, Pahneh, (1436)		
Noubar Bath in Tabriz (Qajar era)		
Ganjali khan Bath in Kerman (Safavi era)		
Conclusion	The three-part structure of public baths in Iran is Bineh, Mediator and Hot chamber. which are visible on baths in different period.	

the prevalence of a three-part pattern in the structure of public baths in Iran. As mentioned in the book of *Qabus-nama* to introduce the different sections of the bathroom: “When you first go to the hot chamber go to a cold-house, stop there a while so feel enjoyment from its nature. Then go to the Bineh and sit there for a while to take advantage of it. Then go to the warm-house and stay there a while to enjoy also hot chamber and when the heat has affected you go to the private place” (Ibn Iskandar, 1968, 108). It is also worth mentioning that the private place is as an exclusive washing space, which is a part of the hot chamber and has been often created in the corners of it.

In the Safavid era, the baths also had the same three-part structure that Chardin describes in his travel literature: “Iranian bathhouses are generally composed of three large rooms or three enclosures, all of which are blocked by walls (Chardin, 1993, vol. 3, 220). Islamic baths were also built up in ancient style up to the Qajar era, and Drouville described fairly clear the bathhouses of this period with a three-part structure (Drouville, 1991, 61-62). By examined examples and textual evidences it can be concluded that Iranian baths consist of three main sections, each of which is divided into rooms and subdivisions where the hierarchy of Iran’s public baths is shown in Fig. 1.

• **The reasons for using the three-part structure in Iran’s public baths**

According to the above mentioned, a three-part pattern (including Bineh, mediator and hot chamber) has been accepted in different architectural periods for architectural design of baths and can be considered as the main structure of

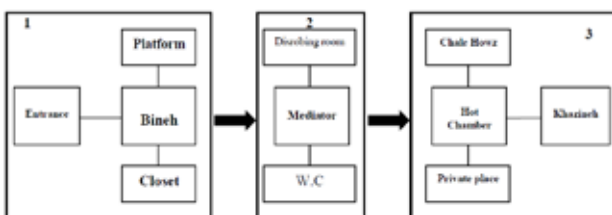


Fig. 1. Spatial diagram and three-part structure of public baths in Iran. Source: authors

the bathroom in Iran. Now, the important question arises as why this three-part model has been used by traditional architects? The three-part structure of Iranian baths could meet the various physical, mental and ritualistic needs of bath users. Some of the reasons that why researchers have expressed for using this three-part structure are as follows: one is medical reason and the need to observe the temperature order of the spaces for health caring, which is also mentioned in the Naseri’s *Hifz Al-Sehha* treatise. Some researchers also emphasized the role of performance and considered the structure of the bath under the influence of bathing rules. Perhaps in order to clarify the reason of acceptance of this three-part pattern, architecture ritual aspect of the baths should be concerned. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the various bathroom functions and the ritual aspects of these functions. The emphasis of the authors on the ritual aspect of the three-part structure of the bath does not mean ignoring and knowing unimportant the functional and medical aspects; but expresses the semantic aspects of the bathroom plan.

One of the main functions of the bathroom is to perform the purification. Considering the memories and travel literatures from various periods, it will be specified that the importance of the bath was due to cultural and religious reasons, and many people were bathing before the dawn for purification and Ghushl (Ghushl purification rituals). Momtahn Al-Dowlah in his diaries has pointed the hardness of bathing before dawn with the intention of purification and Ghushl (purification ritual) “What made me damage every day, was to get up an hour before sunrise to take a shower and perform Ghushl (purification ritual)” (Momtahn Al-Dawlah, 1974, 160).

Chardin also believes that three factors of executing religious rules, observance of purity and preservation of health are incentive for the use of baths by Iranians, and adds that Islam has recommended Muslims to always eliminate evil from their bodies and reckons cleaning the body

as a kind of Religious obedience (Chardin, 1993, vol. 3, 220-230). Pollack in his itinerary also commented on the bathroom and its significance: “The bathroom is closely associated with the Iranian religious life. Because in accordance with the religious rules, due to the menses, the childbirth, basically all kinds of illness and also contact with things that are unclean, the body becomes unpure such as blood, pus, carrion, dog, etc., and in all of these cases the uncleanness should be removed by bathing. So it takes care to build the bath and maintain it” (Pollack, 1989, 244).

What is important is recognition the meaning of the purification. Purification is of “purify” origin that means washing and cleansing with water (Farahidi, 1992, vol. 4, 1). Purification also means cleansing, refinement and evolve; as a patient who first eliminated the disease, then strengthened, and purifying as a verb means to be purified. “but when they have purified themselves, you may Approach them in a lawful manner” (Baghara: 222) “And if you are polluted (due to physical association with women) bathe your whole body” (Ma’aida: 6), it should be noted that the first meaning in both is purification, but Ghusl (purification rituals) causes the purification, so the Ghusl (purification rituals) is the source of esoteric purity (Ghorashi, 1991, vol. 4, 244-242). From the mystics’ point of view the goal of purification is the spirit and body purity combined and because of this attribute of purification, many scholars in the field of religions classify the purification rites in the subset of rite of passage, which we will further explain.

• **The concept of rite of passage and initiation**

The word rite means a certain method, the command for official or religious ceremonies. The word rite itself has a religious root and refers to a set of repetitive, encoded acts (Mokhtarian & Shokri, 2011, 16- 28). Rite is in fact the symbolic representation of the cultural and religious values of a society. The structure of rite is influenced by the metaphysical myths and beliefs, and sometimes by people who have acted and preserved it over

the years. The rite structure is influenced by the lifestyle and ethical, cultural and religious values of a particular society, and on the other hand, it is influenced by the myths, deeds of the gods and heroes and the ancestors of that society (Bayat Fard & Lajevardi, 2016, 21- 36). In Eliade opinion accepting the rite and its obligation makes it possible that even the smallest and most material actions of man such as eating, drinking, sexual relations and etc, become conscious, purposeful and sacred religiously affairs.

In explaining the rites of passage and phenomenology of initiation, Eliade explains that humans must be spiritually born for the second time; he passes from an immature state (foetal) to a perfect state (maturity) of man. In a word, human existence gains evolution in a series of rites of passage and successive initiations. Rites of passage exist at the time of birth, maturity, marriage and death, as well as in some other stages of life, and each of them always includes a series of initiations.

• **Rite of passage trilogy stages**

In Gennep opinion, the rite of passage has three general stages (Fig. 2). The first stage is the separation rites or symbolic death, the second stage is transition, and the last is the return or incorporation (Van Gennep, 1960, 15-16). The ceremony begins everywhere with the separation of the candidate from the family and the isolation period in the shrubbery or the plain.

Here there is a symbol of death. there was a belief that the novice is swallowed by a monster. In monster stomach there is cosmic night. It is the immature state in both cosmic and human life levels. Then the candidate stolen to cottage, cave or abyssal that is

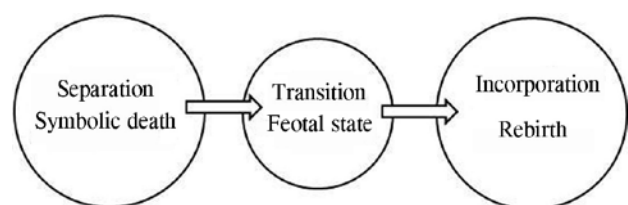


Fig. 2. Three-part of rites of passage. Source: authors.

symbol of mother's uterus. Symbolic death of the novice means returning to the immature state. After that, the novice must be reborn; this stage includes tortures (such as mutilating, boiling, hotting, crushing the teeth, and cutting off fingers), which has many meanings and including the symbolism of death. Then, in the final stage, a new name is given to the novice who is his real name and learns things (Eliade, 1996, 105-141).

Joseph Campbell, in his book *The Hero with Thousand Faces* (1949) uses Van Gennep's observations of rite of passage in a metaphorical way to express his theories, which is based on Jung's views. Campbell's mythical hero travels through three stages of separation, the danger of passing and returning. Therefore, the hero on his journey is compelled to fight personal crises and historical and local constraints, and eventually returns when changed toward ordinary humans (Campbell, 1949, 10-20).

Victor Turner is also an English anthropologist who has broadly expanded the rite of passage theory of Van Gennep. Turner, by a structuralist and functional backing, has focused on specific community structures and how the various aspects of the community focuses in achieving its goals. The transition and middle phase is the quality of the rite of passage which is for Turner favorite. In his view, the mode of a person in transition state has a small number of traces of the preceding and later stages and the features of transition state are vague and beyond all categorized social norms (Turner, 1967, 94). In fact, people belonging to the transition period have nothing; no dignity, no money, no sign, no worldly clothing, no degree, no kinship, and not everything that distinguishes them from others in term of structure. Indeed, their position is the old prototype of sacred poverty (ibid., 237). Transition mode is separation from the previous and the next life that manifests itself in the physical place and separation from relatives and former human beings, and in a sense with being out of time circulation (Turner, 1972, 128). As Turner

said, separation from acquaintances, normal life and habits may be due to punishment, expiatory, purification, cognitive, instructional, health, transformative, and many other value and function aspects (Turner, 1974, 196).

Finally should be noted that rites of passage usually take the clean and impure rules into account because in these times of passage, humans are more vulnerable against evil forces. Clean and impure observance guidelines when introduced in the field of jurisprudence, determine the external necessities and unnecessities, and when they are considered in the field of ethics, they rely on criteria and principles that are necessary for internal and external purification. In religious rituals, both aspects are important. Purification is a way to seek forgiveness, healing, the rebirth of elevation and the reunifying to the source and establishing a three-way relationship between the individual, the cosmos and the social structure. On the other hand, it seems that the entry into every new stage of human life requires the cleansing from the previous state and purified entrance to the next stage which indicates the importance of purification and its relation with the rite of passage.

According to the above mentioned, the bathroom has a three-part structure and one of its important functions is the rituals of purification and many researchers point to the relation between the ritual of purification and the rite of passage. Therefore, an important part of the bathroom's operation is related to the rite of passage and the building body necessarily must give the inneed space to the users of the building for these rites of passage. Now, studying three points is important in knowing the effect of rite of passage on the body of the bathroom. First is studying the bathing rules and the space hierarchy of the bath in relation to the rite of passage. Second is attention to the concept of water and plunging in water; the concept has an important role in the bathing functions and rules, and it should be said that a bath without water and plunging in water will lose its meaning. The third

point is the study of the rite related to the bath and the study of the relationship of these rites with the rite of passage.

• **Bath and its relationship with the rite of passage**

- **Bathing rules**

To explain the ritual function of the bath in relation to the rite of passage, what is emphasized is the evolution of man in the passage from impurity to purity which has both material and spiritual aspects. In the religious view, a person becomes impure infected by certain acts and circumstances that this impurity has two physical and spiritual aspects. The human is forbidden from many religious acts through this impurity and must perform rituals to restore his purity and enter the religious community. In our traditional society, this ritual practice has often been carried out in public baths. Bathing in Iranian customs has three stages (Fig. 3).

In the bathing rules, the first stage is the impure person entrance to the bathroom space that was through a door which had paintings of the battle between goodness and evil or the owner of the hell, on the top. These motifs on baths refer to the entrance to a non-terrestrial and transitional place. In this regard, Imam Ali (PBUH) has been quoted as saying: “What a good place is the bath, remembers the Hell and removes the pus and said: “How bad is bath that removes the shroud and takes away the shame” (Ibn Babawayh, 1997, 51).

The entry of the unpure person into the bathroom and taking off clothes is the first phase of the passage to the purity. Undressing is a symbol of death and separation and entering to the foetal state. In Islamic texts, when entering the hothouse, is mentioned to say “O God, cleanse me from the unclean wickednesses, and pure my outward and

inward” (Tabarsi, 2001, 240). This mention denotes the relation of purity of the body and soul. The next step is cleaning and washing the body and passing through the hot chamber which is a reflection of the transition state and the findings of the spiritual journey in which a person by removing the impurities from the body, provides spiritual purity in itself. As in jurisprudential and religious sciences in order to obtain purity it is necessary first to remove the same uncleanness from the body and then to perform the stages of purification and Ghusl (purification ritual). The final stage is Ghusl (purification ritual) in the water of bath which brings about a rebirth and a return to cleanliness. Thus according to the bathing rituals, the passage from impurity to purity accomplished in the bath and in three stages of nudity, washing and Ghusl (purification ritual). These three stages of bathing correspond to three passage stages and are close and have a meaningful relation to the hierarchy of the bathing space.

- **Water and Immersion in water as an example of the passage**

In the root-identifying culture of the Persian language, the following is given for word the water: water. One of the quadruple elements is Water, against Fire, River and Stream. In Middle Persian, Ancient Persia, Avestan, Sanskrit, water derived from Hindo-European and means water and river. One of the reasons for the sanctity of water is its purity virtue that pours out any contamination and is used for Padyab and cleansing. The word “Padyab”¹ is also a Greek adjective in the sense of the foot (Mayrhofer, 1996, 80).

In the Holy *Qur'an*, The word “Maa” (Water) has been used for 63 times and has been given much importance, including: “And we appointed Water to be the source of life for all Earthly creatures” (Al-Anbiya’: 30). We know that water is involved in the formation of living beings, which without it there was neither life nor survival (Ghorashi, 1991, vol. 6, 322). Water is the essence of life, water is an element of science and the manifestation of life which keeps alive all elements and the soul’s life is

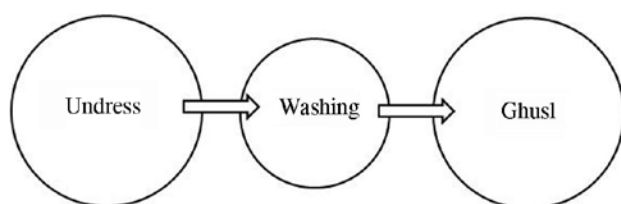


Fig. 3: Three-parts of Bathing. Source: authors.

depends on science, as the body life depends on the water. "And Allah send down water from the sky and with it enlives the dry and withered earth" (*Al-Nahl: 65*) and nothing exists unless it is alive due to water. So some of the ancestors have said that the water is first element which exports and this is the righteous speech" (*Tousi, 1995, 206*).

The creation of water was of great importance in the Hindu and European mythology before the rest of the world. As the sky first was created, water was flowing everywhere, and then the earth came out of it (*Ghorashi, 2001, 48*). Ancient Persians believed that water was guarded by Anahita and Wisura, which means a strong and unpolluted river or pure and mighty water. This goddess enjoyed a special sanctity to the Iranians, so that Yasnya 65 and the fifth Yasht are about it and his waters. It clears the women uterus and the sperm of men and increases the herds and flocks (*Bahar, 1996, 80*). In Vandidad, also water and fire have been introduced as the son and daughter of Ahura Mazda which there are many rules about it (*Razi, 1997, 667*). From the point of view of Christians, the source of water is also the symbol of the Holy Spirit near the Jesus Christ and faithful followers.² In Dao's religion, water is also the symbol of Dao's wisdom which is not repulsed certainly. Water is free and independent and flows down the earth (*Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2005, 527*), and in Tibet the water is the symbol of the covenant and promise with the Lord (*Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1999, 3*).

- Dipping in Water and Rejuvenating

Water in most religions is a means of ritual purification and in fact, is the medium of rite and its renewal and rebirth. There are many myths about Fountain of Youth due to this renewable feature of water. Water is in fact, an ancient symbol for uterus and renaissance. Spiritual purification with water, in a manner leads to a spiritual renewal. The most prominent example is the baptism that in the Mithra rite, the religion of the Christian and Sabeien sect has the spiritual function: "In fact, baptism is a symbol of resurrection and mystical death, and

a sign of conversion and transformation." In the Christians points of view, this is not only cleansing of sins, but also is symbolic rebirth within the church". In the paintings and pictures related to the religion of Mithraism, Mehri spiritual guide or Mithra Moghan, is observed to do baptism, and in the entry of altar there is a pool that may have been used for Ghushl (purification rituals). (*Sharifian & Atony, 2011, 107-130*). Zoroaster, the Iranian Prophet also before the meeting with Amshaspandan and participating in their association, passes the "Daiti" river. Passing from water in Iranian mythology has particular importance because most heroes, before reaching a great position, pass the water, and Zoroaster in order to reach such a position and meet with Amshaspandan, should observe this myth passage of Fountain of Youth (*ibid.*).

Bohalal Askari one of the Muslim mystics, in expressing the difference between cleanliness and purity and the spiritual themes of purification, states that: "cleanliness is on the contrary of contaminaton and not used in moral and mystical meanings. So you can say that he/she has clean face (means beautiful) or you can say somebody's body and clothe is clean, but you can not say clean morality". This meaning is derived from two well-known Prophetic hadiths that are about cleanliness: "Cleanliness comes from faith", and about the importance of purity: "Purity is half of the faith", the appearance of both hadiths implies the difference between cleanliness and purity that express the importance of purity. The most comprehensive and precarious definition that contains other definitions is that Imam Ali (PbuH) stated about the purity of the soul: "Know that therefore the purification of the soul is the cultivation of the appearance by applying the rules of the Sharia moral obligations and obeying God's commandments and prohibitions. According to what is in the soul of act and purification of evils. By the ethic and the benefit of this purity, the soul is susceptible to receive the grace of God, due to His generosity and praise in the holy form that the soul

becomes ornament with the sensual perfections» (Tabataba'ei & Mo'meni, 2014, 33- 54).

In general, Muslim mystics define the purification as purity and purifying the heart from abominations to make the soul ready to receive divine graces. As Avicenna tells Salek (His disciple) in the story of *Hay Ibn Yaqzan*: “What is useful for the soul of the disciple to wash himself in the spring of water which is beside the immortality spring in order to purify then drink from its limpid flowing to cause new power in his organs “(Avicenna, 1987, 36). Sohravardi also refer in his epistle “Red wisdom” to such a concept and states: “Anyone who performs Ghusl (purification rituals) at the spring will never be discouraged. Anyone has found the meaning of the truth, will achieve the spring. When he came out from the spring will obtain talent” (Sohravardi, 2001, 238).

The sayings of Muslim mystics and such examples state the water as a symbol of life, and purification and Ghusl with it can lead to spiritual development. As mentioned, purification with water in Islam is also associated with the initial birth, re-birth and spiritual transformation. Hence, dipping and plunging in water is a symbol of return to the former state and complete rebirth and a new and pure birth (Zomorodi, 2003, 133). In general, immersion in water for purification has three stages: 1. to undress; 2. to plunge; 3. to get out of water (Fig. 4). According what was said and pursuant to many Islamic scholars and mystics, purification and plunge in the waer can be categorized as rites of passage and the three-part structure of purification is in relation to the three part structure of the passage.³

The relationship between purification and rite of

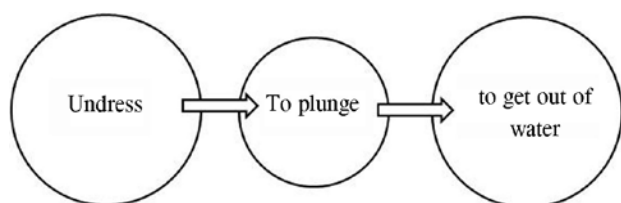


Fig. 4. Three-part of purification. Source: authors.

passage in Iran has an ancient background. The purification in the Mithraism rite shows the old example of this relationship. Although there is no comprehensive and complete information on the quality and manner of purification rite performance in the Mithra rite, but according to the scholars of ancient Iranian religions, and the Mehr religion followers for three days and three nights at certain Binehs were bathed and in order to be ready for their religious ceremonies (Razi, 2005, 88), the necessity of cleansing and washing during the ceremony led to the erection of Mehrabs along the flowing waters (Huart, 2000, 132). There is also clear evidence that various Ghusl (purification ritual)s performed at the time of Mithra’s followers entrance to each of the seven degrees of Mithraism (Vermaseren, 1993, 156-167), which explicitly show Mithraism purification rite relationship with the rite of passage and the ancient history of these rituals in Iran. It is also necessary to mention that most scholars have the same opinion that the Mithra rite and Mithraism rules have Iranian root, and the Roman Mithraism derives from the Persian Mehr rite.

• **Other bathroom functions related to rite of passage**

The aim of the authors of this section is to emphasize that some of the public bathroom functions have been related to rite of passage and the bathroom architecture space has been responding to such needs.

- **Afterbirth Bath**

When a child is born, she/he only has a natural existence and neither his family has recognized him nor accepted by the community. Various rites of passage that promptly performed after the birth, given the baby a real status and enters the living community through these rituals (Eliade, 1996, 137). The birth as the first passage stage means the end of foetal life and the beginning of life in another world. Since there is no meaning for a passage without the rite, at this stage some acts are performed such as ritual washing, the rite of naming and so on.

The bathing of the baby is part of this rite of passage, which has been common in many parts of Iran. Bathing after giving birth to a baby, has a special time and rules and often vary in different places. The contamination and impurity of childbirth should be eliminated from the infant and the woman, and will not be removed just by washing, so requires special day and rules. Otherwise, the impure, although apparently purified, but will remain in woman and the infant soul and will have eternal consequences in the life of both. Bathing in the third and seventh days are commonplace in many places, but bathing for the day 40 after the birth is common in all areas. (Asadian Khorramabadi, 2005, 25).

- Wedding bath

In most societies, the bride and groom wear white clothes. In general, the common setting of all types of these rites is due to the occurrence of a passage in the individual's life. Conducting the marriage rite, in addition to changing the quality of a woman and a man's life, brings a systematic social form includes concepts such as birth and commitment. Each marriage leads to a pressure and danger, and therefore resolves a crisis and comes with its special rite of passage (Eliade, 1996, 137).

In Iran, the marriage ceremony or at least part of it took place in the bathroom. As the Hadith states: "Someone asked from Imam Reza (PbuH) about the reading *Quran* and marriage in the bathroom, that he said is okay". This hadith regardless of whether it is false or not, reflects that in the past, the marriage ceremony used to be held in the bathroom. One of the most important marriage rites is Henna celebration which is often held in the bath and has direct relationship with the rite of passage⁴ (Rafi'far & Kamallou, 2014, 47-27).

- Mourning bath

Death is also one of the main stages of the passage which has its own rituals that are performed in the form of rituals for the deceased himself in the form of funeral rituals as well as for survivors. Mourning bath is an example of these rituals. For example,

in Faridan province, the mournful Lores after the 40th day put out black shirts from family. Invite women to go to bath and put henna on their hair and request them not to wear black dresses (Asadian Khorramabadi, 2005, 126). There is also a tradition in Gilan and other parts of Iran that is famous as mourning bath. Thus, in addition to the purification rite which is classified as the rites of passage; one can establish a meaningful relationship between the bathing rules and other bath functions with rites of passage. Therefore, the concept of the rite of passage in constructing and designing the bathroom - either consciously or unconsciously - has been interesting to the traditional architect, or at least provide the hierarchy and specific architecture of the public baths as a suitable place for conducting rites of passage.

Conclusion

According to what has been said, architecture is a cultural category, and those who create architectural works inevitably and unwittingly use the cultural symbols of their community. Therefore, the architectural design of a building is based on the cultural and social needs of its creators, therefore, in order to find the reasons of establishing a building and identifying its formation roots, have to pay special attention to the building functions and cultural roots of these functions. Hence, to find the roots of the emergence of public baths in Iran, it is necessary that first examine its functions. According to the studies and Table 1, it is determined that the three-part pattern (Bineh, mediator and hot chamber) is a fundamental structural pattern in Iranian baths architecture. To find the reasons for using the three-part pattern, bathroom functions was investigated. The two main functions are cleanliness and purification, which are both ritualistic in Islam and according to the findings, it is resulted that the purification and other bath functions (such as mourning and wedding and afterbirth baths) all relate to the rites of passage (With three stages of separation

or symbolic death, transition and rejoin). On the other hand, as described, Ghusl (purification ritual)s and purification with water are exemplary of rites of passage and have three stages that are semantically and structurally similar in many respects. Therefore, purification and bathing practices can be in line with the course of human evolution in rite of passage; so that in order to meet the needs and functions, this three-part course of passage from impurity to purity has emerged in the three-dimensional space hierarchy of the bath. This does not mean the rejection of material reasons

(such as the medical and climatic reasons, etc.), but the semantic and ritual aspect of the Iranian public baths architecture can be considered a rite of passage pattern, which was the inspiration of the traditional architect in designing the bath three-part architecture. This three-part structure can be called the “generative base” of bathroom, which the baths architecture design has been arranged based on it in different periods of the traditional architecture history of Iran,. At the end, the achievements of this paper have been compared with previous studies in (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of research achievements with previous research results. Sources: authors.

Title of research and authors	Result of the research	Compare with the present research
Tabasi et al. (2007). Recognizing physical characteristics of Iranian baths in Safavid period.	The Safavid baths have similarities specially in successions of Bineh, mediator and hot chamber and more extent of Bineh to hot chamber; Bineh and hot chamber proportionally similar	In the present research three part structure of bath is introduced as the main structure. In comparison with past research that emphasized on quantitative and proportions of spaces, in the present research spirite of three part structure and its relation with rite of passage have been considered.
Fakhar Tehrani (2000). Bath in the view of Time.	Building the bath has related to purification rite and its record related to Mithraism rite in ancient Iran.	The present research emphasizing the baths after Islam, introduces purification as a main function of bath. Purification is a reappearance of rite of passage that has trilogy structures and meaningful element in designing the bath.
Molaei and Gholampour (2014). Bath and bathing in Iranian culture of Qajar era.	The quadruple role of bath in the health, religious, aesthetic and social fields	The present research does not ignore different functions of bath specially in health and social fields but according to religious beliefs, traditional societies emphasise more on religious function (purification).
Rouh Al-Amini (2007). Public Bath in Yesterday Society, Culture and Litreture.	Baths in Iran in addition to cleanliness have social function and similar physical structure.	Present research shows that some of the social rites like wedding and mourning bath related to rites of passage and three part structure of bath has been answered such social and ritual needs.
Bayat fard & Lajevardi (2016). Transformation and changing ontology in rites of passage.	Rites of passage consider pure and unpure laws generally and individual cause transformation of ontology by performing the rite of passage	Authors also emphasize in this paper on firm relation between purification and the rite of passage and consider to relation between three part structur of the passage and three part structure of the bath.
Rafi'far & Kamallou (2014). Studying the Henna rite from a long time ago to the now.	The Henna rite is one of the ancient Iranian rites and reappear of the rite of passage that was held in the bath.	The Henna rite and wedding bath and other functions of bath are of rite of passage that was held in the bath according to its special structure.
Asadian Khorramabadi (2005). The Rite of Passage in Iran.	Introduce some related rituals with rite of passage in different parts of Iran and the place of holding these rites is in bath.	Some of bath fuctions has been in related to rite of passage and its three part structure is cause to accept bath as a place for holding these rites.

Endnote

1. See: Boyce (1991).
2. See: Live water, the sign of Holy Spirit. (2017). Retrieved from www.irancatholic.com.
3. See: Eliade (1996) and Peyer Bayard, (1997).
- 4- See: Molaei & Gholampour (2014).

Reference list

- Asadian Khorramabadi, M. (2005). *Transition Rites in Iran: Comparative Study of Iranian Rites in the Spheres of Culture and Geography*. Tehran: Roshanan.
- Avicenna. (1987). *Hay Ibn Yaqzan* (Abu 'Ubayd Al-Juzjani, Trans.). H. Corbin (ed.), Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Daneshgahi.
- Bahar, M. (1996). *Research on Mythology in Iran*. Tehran: Tous.
- Bayard, J. P. (1997). *La symoblique de feu* (J. Sattari, Trans.). Tehran: Markaz
- Bayat Fard, F. & Lajevardi, F. (2016). Transformation and Ontological Change in Transition Rituals. *Journal of Religion Studies*, 10(19), 21-3.
- Boyce, M. (1991). Padyab and nerang: two Pahlavi terms further consider. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 54(2), 281-291.
- Campbell, J. (1949). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Bollingen series 17). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chardin, J. (1993). *Travels in Persia* (I. Yaghmai, Trans.) Tehran: Tous.
- Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1999). *Dictionnaire des Symboles: Mythes, Reves, Coutumes* (vol. 2, S. Fazaeli, Trans.). Tehran: Jayhoun.
- Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (2005). *Dictionnaire des Symboles: Mythes, Reves, Coutumes* (vol. 1, S. Fazaeli, Trans.). Tehran: Jayhoun.
- Drouville, G. (1991). *Travel in Iran* (M. Etemad Moghadam, Trans.). Tehran: Shabaviz.
- Eliade, M. (1996). *Sacred and Profane* (N. Zangoie, Trans.) Tehran: Soroush.
- Fakhra Tehrani, F. (2000). Bath in the view of time. *Soffeh*, 10(30), 94-105.
- Farahidi, K. (1992). *Ketab Al-'ain* (M. Makhzoumi & I. Samarei, Trans.). Qom: Hejrat.
- Ghorashi, S. A. A. (1991). *Qamus-e Quran*. Tehran: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Islamia.
- Ghorashi, A. (2001). *Water and mountains in India and Iran mythology*. Tehran: Hermes
- Huart, C. (2000). *La Perse Antique et la Civilisation* [Iran and Iranian civilization] (H. Anousheh, Trans.). Tehran: Majid.
- Ibn Babawayh (1997). *Al-Amali Sheikh Saduq* (M. Kamare'ei, Trans.). Tehran: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Eslamiya.
- Ibn Iskandar, E. (1968). *Qabus-name* (G. Yousefi, Trans.). Tehran: Bongah-e Tarjome va Nashr-e Ketab.
- Kiani, M. (2007). *Iranian Architecture of the Islamic Period*. Tehran: Samt.
- Kottak, C. P. (2007). *Anthropology: the Exploration of Human Diversity*. (M. Dolati, Trans.). Tehran: Elmi.
- Lotfivand Vahid, V. (2010). *Formation Process Iranian-Islamic Baths, early Islam to Saljuk Era*. Esfahan: Art University of Esfahan.
- Mayrhofer, M. (1996). *Etymologisches Worterbuch des Altindoarischum*. Heidelberg: Winter verlang.
- Mokhtarian, B. & Shokri, S. (2011). The role of the ram in the rituals associated with the great Buddhist Goddess in Lorestan. *Anthropology Journal*, (1), 16-28.
- Molaei, M. & Gholampour, A. (2014). Bath and Shower in Iranian culture in Qajar era. *Historical Culture Studies*, 6(21), 121-148.
- Momtahn Al-Dawlah, M. (1974). *Memories of Momtahean al-Dawlah*. By Husseinqoli Khan Shaghaghi, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Pollack, J. (1989). *Iran and Iranians* (K. Jahandari, Trans.) Tehran: Kharazmi.
- *Quran* (). M. M. Fouladvand, Trans., Tehran: Osve.
- Rafi'far, K. & Kamallou, J. (2014). The Study of the Hanaband Faith from past to present. *Journal of Popular Culture and Literature*, 2(4), 27-47.
- Razi, H. (1997). *Vandidad*. Tehran: Fekr-e Rouz.
- Razi, H. (2005). *Moghan: Teachings and Ceremonies and Fundamental Beliefs*. Tehran: Sokhan.
- Rouh Al-Amini, M. (2007). *Public Bath in Yesterday Society, Culture and Literture*. Tehran: Ettl'at Institute.
- Sharifian, B. & Atony, M. (2011). Ancient sample of water and its function in myth and epic. *Journal of Persian Language and Literature Islamic Azad University*, 3(9), 107-130.
- Sohravardi, S. Y. (2001). *Shihaboddin Yahya Sohravardi Oewres Philosophiques et Mystiques* (H. Nasr, Trans.). Tehran: Research Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- Tabarsi, A. (2001). *Al-Adab Al-Diniat le-khaza'emat Al-Ma'iniat* (A. Abedi, Trans.). Qom: Za'er.
- Tabasi, M., Ansari, M., Fakhra Tehrani, F. & Tavousi, M. (2007) Recognition of the Physical Properties of Iranian Baths during the Safavid Period. *HONAR-HA-YE ZIBA*, (29), 49-58.
- Tabataba'ei, M. & Mo'meni, F. (2014). Harmony from the perspective of Muslim mystics. *Journal of Religious Thought*, 14(2), 33-54.
- Tousi, Khaje Nasir al-din. (1995). *The Beginning and the Conclusion*. By H. Hasanzade Amoli, Tehran: Entesharat-e Farhang va Ershad-e Eslami.

- Turner, V. (1967). *Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V. (1972). *The Ritual Process*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Turner, V. (1974). *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. V. Turner, (Ed.). *SYMBOL, MYTH, AND RITUAL SERIES*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage* (M. Vizedom & G. Caffee, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vermaseren, M. (1993). *Mithra Ce Dieu mysterieux* (B. Naderzade, Trans.). Tehran: Cheshmeh.
- Zomorodi, H. (2003). *Comparative Criticism of Religions and Mythologies in Shahnameh Ferdowsi, Khamseh Nezami and Mantegh Al-Ta'ir*. Tehran: Zavar.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to the Bagh-e Nazar Journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kazemi Shishavan, M. & Baybordi, M. (2019). *The Role of Rite of Passage in Physical Structure of Iran's Public Baths*, *Bagh-e Nazar*, 16(79), 43-56.

DOI: 10.22034/bagh.2019.136094.3636

URL: http://www.bagh-sj.com/article_98943_en.html

