
Architecture of The heritage buildings in Najaf and its role in promoting national identity

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Abstract

Heritage represents the living memory of the individual and society , it is cultural identity that people recognize about the privacy of people . That is the full record of human activity in a society preserved in the collective memory of the people . It is a manifestation of individual and collective creativity of the nation during its long history . As a result , heritage has a strong relationship with the cultural practices of society and its outlook for the future as well as the link between the present and the past. Therefore, the loss of cultural heritage means the loss of the nation's memory , identity and pride in its own history and present.

Talking the architectural heritage of Najaf, which is one of the main pillars of the city's heritage through the ages, means talking about the variables in the moving time and the fixed place. Najaf in its plans and architecture as one of the historical cities of religious origin had to respond on its architectural planning to a range of needs and factors that influenced the pattern of planning and the shape of the city and the models of buildings .

In order to deepen the subject , we chose the old Najafi house as a model for local architecture . Mr. Ali Al-Damarji's house was chosen as a model in Al-Huwaish district . As it is characterized by the integration of the elements of planning , architectural and construction , as well as the capacity of an area of (380 m².), and its good condition as classified by the heritage survey committee of the city of Najaf grade (A) in terms of heritage status , and the state of construction .

The study has found that the architecture of the heritage buildings in Najaf and the Najafi house in particular has some characteristics that are almost unique to them . However , this privacy does not mean the identification of an independent identity . Rather , it is the local privacy which is integrated it its overall image within the identity National Heritage of Iraq . In spite of the presence of different oriental influences , the Najafi house remained conservative in its basic layout of its traditional character , which imitates the old and ancient Iraqi style . And this in itself drawn the image of Iraqi cultural communication and authenticity through the ages .

Keywords : heritage , culture , tradition , legacy , Najaf , houses , planning .

Introduction :

The meaning of the words "heritage", "tradition" and "Legacy" became parallel to the concept of culture or civilization⁽¹⁾. It shows us a dimension of human production of artistic, literary, scientific and historical value in the past and present, a witness to human experiences and aspirations. The concept of heritage includes both material and immovable heritage as well as the unrecorded (oral) heritage of customs and traditions. It may be natural, represented by natural features and sites⁽²⁾. In the concept of the World Organization of Culture and Science in ((United Nations Educational , Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO))), heritage refer to : " architectural works, sculpture and painting on buildings, elements or formations of archaeological character, inscriptions and a set of monuments of exceptional universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science " ⁽³⁾ .

Heritage represents the living memory of the individual and society, it is the cultural identity that people recognize about the uniqueness of people and what distinguishes them from other people. That is the full record of human activity in a society preserved in the collective memory of people. It is a manifestation of individual and collective creativity of the nation during its long history ⁽⁴⁾. As a result, heritage has a strong relationship with the cultural practices of society and its outlook for the future as well as the link between the present and the past ⁽⁵⁾. Therefore, the loss of cultural heritage means the loss of the nation's memory, identity and pride in its own history and present.

Al-Najaf heritages :

The national identity, according to many sociological and anthropological studies that agree to be socially given and based on the principle of congruence and harmony bears the connotations of diversity, integration and difference. The identity operates in cultural heritage as a condition and climate; it is the basis of creativity, Self-righteous in its most extreme form and celebration, it is based on an instinctive sense of belonging and localism and is inherent to private culture within its original features, which are the holders of national identity ⁽⁶⁾ .

As for Najaf, the relationship between the individual Najafi and his heritage, in our assessment, is an organic relationship, since the local and national identity as a whole feeds on the heritage, because it is related to the consciousness of the dimensions of civilization, historical, religious and political dimensions. It is related to the historical, philosophical, literary and intellectual achievements of the city that no other individual attaches to his heritage. And that his

contemporary life is based on this inherited and contemporary equation at the same time.

The Nejfi individual belongs wholly to his heritage and is categorized without reservation. He feels that his attachment to it is an extension of his attachment to his perception of the world and the universe and even beyond life. The heritage has a spiritual and psychological dimension which places it outside the circle of thought, and within the circle of imitation. He does not have a sense of heritage; it is a supreme self-value, and he deals with it perfectly. The reason for this in our estimation is due to the strong correlation between the local heritage of the city and the identity that expresses the individual's belonging to his local and national environment. Heritage and identity are interdependent elements of the self. And they are integral components of individual and collective personality in the city. Especially if we know that Najaf is exposed throughout its history to the influence of foreign residents.

The discussion about the architectural heritage in Al-Najaf, which is one of the main pillars of the city heritage through the age means discussing the variables in moving time and a fixed place. Najaf in its plans and architecture as one of the historical cities of religious origin had to respond in its architectural planning to a range of needs and factors that influenced the style of planning, the shape of the city and the models of buildings⁽⁷⁾.

The first environmental factor construction is the geographical one, Najaf belongs to a location with climatic and environmental characteristics of desert, which is a specific factor rather than a catalyst. The summer season, high temperature, frequent dust storms, and the geological nature of it is land have had a clear affect on the inhabitants' digging into the underground tunnels, a phenomenon that almost could be found in every house in the old fenced city. It is like another city under the ground because of the enormity of its numbers⁽⁸⁾.

The second factor is the religious factor. It gave the city a spiritual dimension according to which Najaf became a holy city. This factor was influenced by the need to perform the religious function, which centered on the presence of the Imam Ali shrine, which became the center of the city and the center of its religious activity. And it then became a role beyond the religious function to matters of the world : a social, cultural, commercial and political center of the city. It is sufficient to know that Najaf in all areas of its symbolic and material activities is linked to the existence of Holy Imam Ali shrine and its religious function. This has had a clear impact on the determination of the city's plans and architecture in accordance with the religious function. There are hundreds of buildings built for religious purposes,

Religion, or for purposes of burial ⁽⁹⁾. The influence of the religious factor in the design of the role was clear as it was designed in the veil of women, so the house was often divided into two parts completely separate. The exterior is reserved for guests and friends, and the interior is reserved for women. It is dedicated to rest, sleep and housework.

As for the technical and architectural styles of the buildings, the religious site of Najaf ; the many visitors and immigrants from different nationalities and countries have made it a vessel in which there are many artistic and architectural styles especially the oriental ones. The oriental Islamic styles such as domes, semi- domes, have impact on the Al-Haidari courtyard, mosques, schools and even homes. In Najaf, several artistic styles and architectural traditions have taken place, ranging from what existed in the region to an old local style, new Islamic art styles borrowed from oriental architectural and architectural traditions, and what was responded to by the necessities and requirements of the local environment. All of these gave the character of the local identity that Najaf had. Its main units were domes, arches, Arabic calligraphy and decorations, which are not very different from those in other Iraqi cities, which represents the unity of national identity.

Another important factor affecting the architecture of Najaf was the nature of the site and the availability of raw materials for the production of architectural units within local construction methods. The location of Najaf was characterized by the availability of clay to make bricks, and the abundance of sand and limestone, which are the primary materials for the production of plaster. With the availability of bricks and plaster and excellent and cheap materials, architecture in Najaf has become dependent on them mainly in the construction of domes, arches and walls. These materials have proved the durability of their structures and their permanence for hundreds of years as in the building of Al-Haidari courtyard.

Due to the extreme location of Najaf opened to the desert, and the possibility of being exposed to the risk of aggression or invasion there was a need to protect the city from dangers. Thus, the military factor emerged in directing the city's plans and construction towards the construction of the walls, the reinforcement of the fortifications and the digging of the trenches . To the extent that the walls were of great importance in protecting Najaf from the Wahhabi attacks⁽¹⁰⁾. They were determining factors in the expansion of the city, a major cause of its congestion, narrow roads, small architectural units and multiple floors. The existence of a network of channels dug underground at least 40 meters deep, which connected the wells of many houses in Najaf ⁽¹¹⁾, the effect of creating a network and a hidden movement can

only be used by the people of the city in hours of need and embarrassment, they can move from one house to another, through this land network. This network of channels can be considered as a means of defense that can be used against the enemy when needed, as happened during the Najaf revolution against the British in 1918⁽¹²⁾.

The architecture of the heritage buildings in Najaf and the characteristics of the national identity, The Najaf House is a model: Architecture is a reflection of the various cultural aspects within the framework of a special society or a comprehensive civilization. Architecture represents the outcome of intellectual and social values and the subsequent rules of a particular era, while at the same time expressing aesthetic content and artistic spirit. In Najaf, elements of local architecture responded to the requirements of the local environment, the values of the Islamic religion, and the characteristics of Arab society and ethics, which were prominent features of the city and its inhabitants

These characteristics gave a distinctive taste of architecture in the city ranging from the original Iraqi heritage rooted in the depth of history, and borrowed from the architectural models of Islamic orientalism, as well as the response to the necessities of the local environment and social heritage and the economic situation. Therefore, the construction units in the city, such as houses, mosques, schools, cemeteries, markets, and tents, in each unit have similar architectural and technical characteristics that are somewhat similar.

Al-Najaf houses survey :

As a support to the investigation, old House Najafi was selected⁽¹³⁾ as a model of local architecture. Mr. Ali Al-Damarji's house was chosen as a model in Al-Huwaish district. As it is characterized by the integration of the elements of planning, architectural and construction, as well as the capacity of an area of (380 m.²), and its good condition as classified by the Heritage Survey Committee of the city of Najaf grade (A) in terms of heritage status, and the state of construction⁽¹⁴⁾.

We had a field visit to the house above on 10 April 2017 accompanied by the People's Committee for the Protection of Antiquities and Heritage in Najaf to see the features and state of heritage. We found that the house consists of ten rooms on two symmetrical floors with three bathrooms and three health facilities. In the middle of the southern side is a large Ewan whose roof is raised on wooden poles (7 meters) long and overlooks a large square paved with branches (the courtyard courtyard). The house consists of three three-layer vaults, three of which reach the rocky layer at least 30 meters below the ground. The ceilings are covered with bricks and plaster in the style of ancient domes. The house also has a deep well reaching the aqueduct that extends underground 40 meters deep. Its interior

facades include a number of semi-circular henna with ribbons of decoration that extend across its four sides, and include colorful drawings and inscriptions in Arabic script. The windows are overlooking the courtyard of the three sides and the number of (12) window, decorated with wood and engineering wood and decorated with stained glass. The ceilings are built with columns of logs covered with wooden boards above them a layer of rice husks to achieve the highest degree of thermal insulation and light weight.

From this it is clear that the house in its general form contains elements of basic architectural and planning that can be found in many of the heritage houses of Iraq, but it is characterized by some characteristics that are almost unique to the houses of Iraqi or other Islamic cities in terms of design and use, The existence of basements, wells, basins and cemeteries are rarely found in a house other than the old Najaf house⁽¹⁵⁾. However, in this excellence, we find only images of multicolored images within the national unity of the Iraqi architecture and its authenticity. These elements can be elaborated as follows:

The open courtyard : is the first place in the planning of the house followed by the residential rooms and other facilities, entrances and passages to take its place around that courtyard. This is an old Iraqi tradition where the remains of residential buildings were found in the city of Ur in southern Iraq showing the inner courtyard or the open middle courtyard in the forefront of its design elements⁽¹⁶⁾. The courtyard is an open courtyard facing the sky and hidden from view by virtue of its mediation of the house⁽¹⁷⁾. It plays an important role in the distribution of natural and air lighting to the surrounding rooms. The wide windows have a direct view of them. They form the facades of the rooms on the flat-tiled plaza, locally known as al-Farashi with beautiful geometric shapes. The bowl of the house contains two manholes of water one is for rain and household use and the other is for heavy water.

The well: The courtyard of the house is accompanied by the well and its basin where it is necessary to dig a well in every house which costs a lot . It use water for various uses, except for drinking and cooking because it is not suitable for that. And the depth of the well (40) meters, where the level of groundwater is reached above the clay layer. At the level of this layer most of the wells are connected to each other by means of channels in the shape of an underground water and hydrological network that ends with an opening on the lower reaches of the Najaf Sea⁽¹⁸⁾. The diameter of the well is 120 cm. On the well, a wooden pulley passes over a long rope that ends with a bucket of water from the well and collects in the basin⁽¹⁹⁾ which is required in its size to reach the quorum for purification. It is worth mentioning here

that extracting water from the wells is a popular profession in Najaf and is practiced by a number of people called "Malayya" and its vocabulary (Mallah)⁽²⁰⁾. The well is also used as a channel to ventilate the basins through special openings extending from the basement to the well.

The basement: It is a characteristic of the Najafi House. In the old city every house includes one or more. And the basement is dug in the ground and then built from within the bricks and plaster in the form of contracts and domes, And the floor is mixed with flat bricks (al-Farashi). Its size and depth vary according to the house and its people, and the deeper it was, the colder it was. In this house there are three catamarans, one of which is a basement that reaches a depth of thirty meters underground. It basement to these basements with a set of stairs, carved in the ground and built of bricks down to the required depth. As the temperature rises at noon in the summer to 50 degrees Celsius outside, inside the basement, the temperature goes down to thirty degrees. And in the second and the third temperature declines between ten and twenty degrees Celsius. The basement of Sen is very cold, so that can only sleep with a cover Thick⁽²¹⁾. Because of these canyons can be said that the city of Najaf is based on almost complete cavity⁽²²⁾. The family in the basement spends long hours of the hot summer day, especially the afternoon and beyond as well as some nights where dust storms blow. The basement is ventilated by side openings on the well. There are also vertical ducts for ventilation built inside the walls whose edges reach the top of the surface and the openings are facing the prevailing wind direction. The air moves from the top to the floor of the basement, thus providing a cool place with ventilation and natural cooling⁽²³⁾.

Alewan: It is a building consisting of three walls and a roof. It is exposed from the front facing the courtyard of the house. It is known locally as Altarmah. Its area is more than 40 m² and its roof is raised with wooden pillars from the front facade 7 meters. Alewan is often used for sitting and is furnished with mattresses and carpets for times of rest, beautiful beauty and temperate atmosphere, as well as some meals or tea. Alawawin was known in Islamic architecture at the Dar Alemira Palace in Kufa and at the Alakhaydir Palace near Karbala⁽²⁴⁾, which confirms the importance of communication and the unity of the national identity of the Iraqi heritage.

Alshanashil: Another characteristic of the Old Najafi House is the balcony in the rooms on the first floor known as Alshanashil. The house included four of them, all overlooking the inner courtyard. These balconies are made of wood of various types instead of bricks and plaster for the purpose of achieving the highest lightness, thermal insulation and artistic aesthetics. These balconies contain various

types of decorative and vegetal decoration, and the windows are on a beautiful technical level and carry small stained glass⁽²⁵⁾. Alshanshil is another image of the Iraqi identity unit, which is found in the heritage houses in Basra and as far as Mosul.

Hanging corridors and wooden pillars is due to the fact that the house is of two floors, and for the purpose of increasing the area on the first floor, corridors are found in front of the rooms on the first floor, and reach the rooms on the north side of the house. It overlooks the open courtyard and is preceded by a wooden and iron barrier with a beautiful traditional decoration called a quarry. These corridors are based on the wooden poles of the steel type known as the Dalk. These columns end on top with a beautifully curved crown that helps to reduce the wooden bridge section that overlays a number of these columns⁽²⁶⁾. This is common in Iraqi heritage houses in all areas of Iraq, thus reinforcing the unity of identity of the Iraqi heritage.

The entrance or the Majaz: One of the characteristics of the old houses in Najaf is the entrance that leads to the courtyard of the house. If this entrance is wide, it is called "Dulan ". If the area of the house does not allow the design of the two states, The purpose is to achieve complete isolation of the internal section of the home which is special for women. In the case of the small area of the house, which is often replaced by a narrow corridor placed in the outer entrance curtain obscured vision and to increase in reserve is placed another curtain at the entrance to the inner section obscures the inside vision of the section of the "Barranie" than inside the house, Thereby achieving a religious and social purpose. This applies to all heritage houses in all areas of Iraq.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, we can say that the architecture of the heritage buildings in Najaf and the Najafi House in particular has some characteristics that are almost unique . However, this privacy does not mean the identification of an independent identity. Rather, it is the local privacy which is integrated in its overall image within the identity of the National Heritage of Iraq. In spite of the presence of different oriental influences, the Najafi House remained conservative in its basic layout of its traditional character, which imitates the old and ancient Iraqi style. And this in itself draws the image of Iraqi cultural communication and authenticity through the ages.

Notes :

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- ²¹ ibid, P. 404.
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²³ Najaf Mayor Shaker Hamid said that in these corridors held meetings, and political conferences, and is the only way to establish councils of people and forbidden in Najaf. M.I. The Secret Report No. 28 of 12 February 1934, "Reports of the Administrative Role / Karbala Brigade", numbered 59 / K-2, p.

²⁴ Al-Ansari, Op.Cit. , P. 458.

²⁵ Ibid, P. 461.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 460-461.

عمارة المباني التراثية في النجف ودورها في تعزيز الهوية الوطنية

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الملخص :

يمثل التراث الذاكرة الحية للفرد والمجتمع ، وهو الهوية الثقافية التي يتعرف بها الناس على خصوصية شعب ما ، أي أنه السجل الكامل للنشاط الإنساني في مجتمع ما ، وهو مظهراً من مظاهر الإبداع الفردي والجماعي للأمم خلال تاريخها الطويل ، أما الهوية الوطنية فتمثل شرطاً وماخاً في التراث الثقافي ، فهي سند الإبداع وشرط الإحساس بالذات والانتماء ، إنها ترتكز على شعور غريزي بالانتماء والمحلية ، وتظهر ملازمة للثقافة الخاصة في حدود ملامحها الأصلية التي تشكل حاملاً للهوية الوطنية .

إن الحديث عن التراث العماري في مدينة النجف ، الذي يعد أحد الركائز الأساسية لتراث المدينة عبر العصور ، يعني الحديث عن المتغيرات في الزمان المتحرك ، والمكان الثابت . والنجف في خطتها وعمارته كواحدة من المدن التاريخية ذات النشأة الدينية كان عليها أن تستجيب في تخطيطها العماري إلى مجموعة من الحاجات والعوامل التي اثرت في نمط التخطيط وشكل المدينة وطرز عمارة المباني فيها .

ولغرض التعمق في الموضوع تم اختيارنا للبيت النجفي القديم كنموذج للعمارة المحلية ، وتم اختيار بيت (السيد علي الدامرجي) الواقع في محلة الحويش كنموذج لها ، لما يمتاز به من التكامل في العناصر التخطيطية والعمارية والإنشائية ، فضلاً عن سعة مساحتها البالغة (٣٨٠ م^٢) وحالته الجيدة ، إذ صنفته لجنة المسح التراثي لمدينة النجف بدرجة (أ) من حيث الحالة التراثية وحالة البناء .

توصلت الدراسة إلى أن عمارة المباني التراثية في النجف والبيت النجفي منها على وجه الخصوص ، امتازت ببعض الخصائص التي تكاد أن تكون منفردة بها ، إلا أن هذه الخصوصية لا تعني الانفراد بهوية مستقلة ، بل هي الخصوصية المحلية التي تتكامل في صورتها الكلية ضمن الهوية الوطنية للتراث العراقي ، فعلى الرغم من وجود تأثيرات مشرقية مختلفة ، فإن البيت النجفي ظل محافظاً في تخطيطه الأساسي على طابعه التقليدي ، الذي يحاكي الطراز الحيري والعراقي القديم ، وهذا بحد ذاته يرسم صورة للتواصل الحضاري العراقي واصلته عبر العصور .

الكلمات المفتاحية : التراث ، الثقافة ، التقاليد ، الميراث ، النجف ، البيوت ، التخطيط .