

# A Glance at Iranian Traditional Art Education History (Referring to Old Texts and Documents)

Neda Seifi<sup>1,\*</sup>, Hasan Bolkhari Ghehi<sup>2</sup>, Mehdi Mohammadzadeh<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran

<sup>2</sup>University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

**Abstract** Passing through old texts and documents, we encounter many noteworthy points about Iranian traditional art education. Despite the valuable sources, a clear scheme of this art is still missing. For sure, the excellent system of education known as mentoring system has led to such an outstanding past. Meanwhile, some movements such as Islamic chivalry, known as Futuwwah seem to be very influential. Futuwwah was a movement based on ethical principles such as chivalry, generosity, athletics and manliness. Iran researchers believe that this flow has been present since Alexander's attack to Iran (334 B.C). Howsoever, Futuwwah became more popular later by the arrival of Islam and it was divided into different classes and sects where the main principle was magnanimity and chivalry. The most important category included chivalrous craftsmen who were actively working since the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> (A.D) centuries. These craftsmen had their own doctrine written in Futuwwahnamahs. Study of all these sources may open an entry towards an unknown yet mystical, magical and ethical world. Here in this article the writer aims to focus on the main problem which is tracing the roots of Iranian Islamic art education. The intended procedure is going through as many texts as one is allowed to deal with in such a short time. However, the preference is searching in those documents which seem to be more relevant, whether literary or historical. In the end, it's expected that the reader can imagine a meaningful pattern for studying mentoring elements.

**Keywords** Iranian traditional art, Craft, Mentoring system, Islamic chivalry (Futuwwah), Old texts and documents

## 1. Introduction

Iranian traditional art has always been committed to some basic principles. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the artist is sharing the authenticity of art with his successors. In such a continuum the relationship between the master and the student seems to be very important. Maintaining this connection results in the vitality and dynamism of art. The master, owning qualities like openness and generosity, transfers the details to his student. The student's spiritual capacity determines his master's decisions. The master teaches morality beside the proper techniques. Idealism and humbleness is fundamental and the student is taught to consider his work as a divine task. Having passed the successive phases, all his/her obscene characteristics disappear and his/her spiritual world is formed. These are the missing elements in the present time. There should be some serious efforts to elicit such items.

This study tries to look at this topic from the viewpoint of some literary and historical texts. The proper methodology seems to be exploration of such relevant texts, looking for any linkage to mentoring system and its elements. These

texts are not confined to any predefinition and the writer tries to examine as many accessible texts as possible.

## 2. Concept of Profession and Craft in the Past

By concerning historical documents and studying status of crafts and arts in the past, we'll come to a conclusion that art was hidden in all professions among which there was neither a gap nor a contrast. Plus, in Avestan language "hunareh" means good deed, warrior and courage and also in Pahlavi<sup>1</sup> it's an equivalent for warrior, power, virtue, value and skill [1]. "Arkhe" (προέλευση) in Greek language has the same meaning. The distinction between an artwork and a normal object was defined by the soul and sanctity which was blown into it. That's why an artwork is an allegory itself and can be considered symbolic and mystic.

An artwork contains form and content, and applicability is an inseparable part of it. Having chosen the form and the material, the artist began to create something. Meanwhile, he/she considered its efficiency. This didn't mean that the product was merely an object. As an example, architecture always considered efficiency and artistic aspects together. Iranian art highly thought over ethical values and led to the

\* Corresponding author:

nedaseifi.uni@gmail.com (Neda Seifi)

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/arts>

Copyright © 2015 Scientific & Academic Publishing. All Rights Reserved

<sup>1</sup> A middle Persian language

expression of essence.

While looking for the concept of arts and crafts, we are informed that these two have always had a close relationship. Christy Wilson (1891-1973) in his book, "A History of Iran Industries" introduces craft as following: applying skill and taste to create beauty through innovation or imitation. He believes that art and craft are synonymous in Iran. He also considers something as a craft whenever it is handmade [2]. In this sense, even if art and craft are not completely equivalent, they are complementary for sure. In Iran most crafts were practical and likewise, there was no clear distinction between fine arts and practical arts. In fact Art and craft have the same story as the one for the elephant and darkness. Both the craftsman and the artist are touching the elephant in the dark and guessing about what they are touching. Each of them is feeling one different aspect and at the same time one single object. Artist and craftsman may be involved in some debate only because of misunderstanding [3]. Looking for a clarification, we are about to refer to some texts in order to examine the situation of art, craft and profession.

Mirfendereski, a renowned philosopher, poet and mystic of the Safavid era<sup>2</sup> (1562-1640 A.D), has written a treatise named "Sanaeieh Treatise" (Resaleh Sanaeieh). This book is its author's most significant writing that contains valuable scientific and philosophical issues. In this treatise he talks about crafts in scientific yet simple short phrases. He considers craft as a very wide concept which includes whatever originated from human's wise and operative potentials. His criterion for ranking crafts and professions is their usefulness and utility in contrast to their harm and damage. He categorizes the professions as below:

1. Professions whose main subjects are general, like prophecy, leadership, ijtihad (or diligence which is an Islamic legal term that means "independent reasoning" or "the utmost effort an individual can put forth in an activity and philosophy).
2. The ones with detailed subjects like medicine, pharmacology, etc.
3. The ones having general subjects in which the man thinks about his own benefits and tries to go after something which results in his salvation.
4. The ones having detailed subjects in which the man follows his benefits and considers advantageous principles and avoids the harmful professions [4].

In addition, Mirfendereski talks about the differences among people's abilities and capacities. He believes that everybody chooses a proper profession. The importance of crafts and professions has always been emphasized.

In "Chivalry Treatise" (Resaleye Javanmardan)<sup>3</sup> the compiler, referring to "Tohfath-ol-Akhvan"<sup>4</sup> theorizes that

there's no difference between earning something on purpose and earning it by chance. As long as it is useful and perfect, no matter how it is earned, it has its own reward and benefit [5].

Among people who have talked about this issue, we can name Khaje Nasir Tusi, the great Iranian astronomer, philosopher, scientist and theologian (1201-1238 A.D). He puts emphasis on the honor of craftsmanship and the importance of its use. In "Akhlaq-i-Nasiri", a work on ethics (1236 A.D) he states that the value of a craft depends on its ability to improve the reason of man's existence and this respectively is related to the capacity of that man. Likewise, medicine is more honorable than tannery because it cures humans. Obviously art and craft for him are only precious when they can enhance man's wisdom and he believes that the most honorable craft is the one whose product is able to do that [6].

Ibn Khaldun<sup>5</sup>'s Introduction (Mugaddimah) is another important book which can provide a great amount of information about social and economical history of Islamic world in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (A.D). In this book there are lots of texts about lifestyle, art and ways of craftsmanship according to which the crafts are divided into two groups: extensive and compound. The first category includes essential needs and the second one refers to fancy issues. The writer prefers extensive crafts rather than compound ones. In another division, he introduces the crafts as the ones which deal with livelihood of the man (whether essential or not) and the ones that relate to human's thoughts, like science, art and politics. He also talks about two groups of crafts. In the first group are the ones which are essential for the society, like agriculture, sewing, carpentry, building and music [7]. What can be extracted from these categories is that according to Ibn Khaldun, artistic crafts are different but eventually belong to crafts as a whole.

Such a thought can also be found among literary texts and this shows the importance of craftsmanship and profession. Saadi Shirazi, the Iranian poet (1210-1291 A.D) in his great book "Bustan" talks about the necessity of craftsmanship education and its traditions:

"Teach your student that even if he owns Qarun's treasure,  
He shouldn't rely on it 'cause it won't last,

Gold and silver are inconstant but a craftsman's bag will never be empty,

If you have access to a craft, you'll never be needy." [8]

Another literary text which contains lots of unique references to crafts and professions belongs to the poet, Ohadi Maraghei, (1274-1335 A.D), a mystic and a poet who has written "Jam-i-Jam" in 1331 or 1332 A.D:

"Blessed dervish craftsman, who is satisfied with little things in the world,

His aliment is sufficient for him and he's only involved in his own work,

He confesses his incapacity and asks for forgiveness,

Even if there are many people busy dealing with art, only

<sup>2</sup> An Iranian shia'a dynasty

<sup>3</sup> Seven Futuwahnamahs gathered in one book by Morteza Sarraf who has edited them and added an introduction.

<sup>4</sup> "Tohfath-ol-Akhvan Fi Khasaes-el-Fatian" written by "Kamal-e-ddin Abdorazagh Kashani" about chivalry, Elmi-Farhangi publication, 1369

<sup>5</sup> An Arab historiographer and historian (1332-1406 A.D)

such a man may reach prosperity,

...

As the world's order depends on the craftsman, each and every system has its roots in art" [9].

Considering what we have talked about so far, selecting crafts and professions has always been vital for people. By searching for related concepts we can see a movement which is relevant to our discussion in many ways. The following part tries to introduce it.

### 3. Futuwwah (Islamic chivalry)

Futuwwah is a moral quality which can be applied in every aspect of life. It contains characteristics like manliness, youth, chivalry, manhood, sacrifice, and generosity. We can trace this movement in many historical texts and there are a lot of stories and tales about it. According to some historians, chivalry and athletics along morals existed even before Sasanid Empire (224- 651 A.D) and some others believe that chivalrous people (called Fatian) were active since the attack of Alexander the Great [10]. After the arrival of the new Islamic religion, the new religion brought people a new horizon and it was a kind of revival for Futuwwah. Muhammad (Sallallah) having great characteristics such as generosity, forgiveness and compassion, was a symbol of Futuwwah. He was among the members of Mecca chivalry group and participated in Futuwwah treaty of Mecca<sup>6</sup>. Another example of Futuwwah is Imam Ali (pbuh). He was also famous for devotion and generosity and there are a lot of stories and tales about this.

Although Arab researchers believe that chivalry (Futuwwah) had originated there, considering some parts of Iraq as Iran's territory, it's possible that chivalry has been transferred from Iran to Arab world. The concept is present in many words in Islamic hadiths<sup>7</sup>. As an example Imam Ali (pbuh) states that "Avoiding abjection is chivalry" [11].

Henry Corbin, the philosopher and orientalist (1903-1978), has a book named "Traité des Compagnons – chevaliers" in which he considers chivalry as a superb attitude and says that according to "Qabusnamah"<sup>8</sup> (1082 A.D) and other ethical books, chivalry should be owned by all people and everybody is supposed to learn it. He also adds that all social classes and guilds should learn these customs and put them into practice [12].

"Qoshirieh Treatise" (Resaleh Qoshirieh) (1046 A.D) is another book in this domain which is written by Abdolkarim Ibn Hovazi Qoshiri<sup>9</sup> in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (A.D) and Abou Ali Hassan Ibn-e-Ahmad Osmani has translated it into Persian. In this book, Futuwwah is thoroughly introduced in seven pages and the writer has stated many stories and words.

According to him, Futuwwah is forgiving your brother's faults and not blaming him. Futuwwah is also translated as helping the poor [13].

There's another text which may be really helpful and that is "Futuwwahnamah (History, Ethics, Customs & Manners)" written by Muhammad Riaz. In this book, the writer mentions the history of chivalry, its customs, related sects and expressions, etc. This can be a proper source for recognizing and following chivalry in the past. Plus, it may be concluded that Muhammad Riaz believes in the effect of Iranian ancient chivalry on the formation of Islamic chivalry [10].

In the first volume of Ibn Battutah<sup>10</sup>'s itinerary there are clear stories and tales about the concept of chivalry. Chivalrous brothers are presented as those people in all villages and cities, sharing common characteristics, who are always helping the poor and giving charity. A story is told as below:

"On the second day, one of the chivalrous people visited Sheykh Shahabodin Hamavi. He spoke in Turkish and I had no idea what he said. He was wearing shabby clothes and a felt hat. Sheykh asked me if I knew about what he was saying. I said "No". "He's inviting you and your company to a party", he said. I was surprised and said "OK". When he left I told Sheykh that he looked too poor to afford such a party. Sheykh smiled and said "He's one of the heads of a chivalry group and he's a cobbler. He has about 200 craftsmen under control..." We can find many other stories about chivalry. There are also some examples about Dervishes and Sufis' traditions [14].

"Soltani Futuwvahnamah" is another source which can make us familiar with craftsmanship and chivalry. It's written by Molana Hussein Vaez Kashefi Sabzevari<sup>11</sup> in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century (AD). In its introduction, chivalry is clarified thoroughly. According to the author, all craftsmen had some commands and rules for chivalry, which made Futuwvahnamahs. Somewhere else chivalry is explained as an ordinary and simple principle easily understood by craftsmen, farmers and public. Many people are taking care of these features unconsciously. It is stated that the reason for writing such a book is explaining the lifestyle of chivalrous people. One of the important conditions of chivalry is respecting the sanctity of salt meaning that it's really ungrateful to taste somebody's food and betray him [15].

Such a notion is also stated in "Javame-ol-Hekayat"<sup>12</sup> as following: "One Ayyar<sup>13</sup> went to Neyshapour<sup>14</sup> and wanted to rob the treasury but suddenly he saw something shining... He went closer and tasted it. It was salt. He put the gold down and left [16].

<sup>6</sup> A treaty in Mecca according to which the members had to help the poor. Muhammad (Sallallah) was one of the members.

<sup>7</sup> The words of teaching, deeds and sayings of Muhammad

<sup>8</sup> An important Iranian book including ethical ideas written by Onsorolma'ali Keykavus

<sup>9</sup> A Muslim Philosopher (10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D)

<sup>10</sup> A Moroccan explorer known for his extensive travels (1303-1377 A.D)

<sup>11</sup> A famous writer and Sufi

<sup>12</sup> Written by Muhammad Ufi in 1232 A.D containing ethical, historical and religious points

<sup>13</sup> A chivalrous and generous person

<sup>14</sup> A city in Iran

“Mantegh-o-Teyr”, written by Attar Neyshapuri<sup>15</sup> in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (A.D), has a similar tale like that: “Someone arrested his enemy and took him home to take revenge. When he went to fetch the dagger, his wife fed the man with a loaf of bread. When he came back, he saw his enemy eating the bread. He asked him about that... Then he dropped the dagger and said:

When he heard the answer,  
Said now killing you is prohibited.  
‘Cause every man who has tasted our food,  
We cannot stab him” [17].

#### 4. The Relationship between Craftsmanship & Chivalry

Among chivalrous people, emphasizing crafts and professions was of a great importance. It grew to the extent that choosing a craft became one of their main principles [18]. Futuwwah had several groups and categories. Artisans and craftsmen were among those about whom we are going to talk. These groups had their own instructions and rules. Helping people and providing their facilities was very important for them. The texts left from that period show that observing chivalry, magnanimity and piety was vital for them and that's why they tended to relate the origin of crafts to the prophets [19]. All craftsmen were to obey a series of rules to keep their professions venerable. Even the kings tried to be trained for a craft [20]. These craftsmen' chivalry contained a moderate aspect. There are some Futuwwahnamahs like the ones for butchers, shoemakers and cooks [10]. The difficulty of studying chivalry through the history is due to its constant changes. Joining these groups has its own customs. At first, the volunteer should sign a pact. Then he reads out a sermon in front of the heads of the group. He also takes an oath to be honest with his friends and not to betray them. Now the master fastens his waistline and feeds the volunteer with salt and water. He also puts on special trousers and wraps his neck in a red or yellow piece of cloth... Now he can be accepted into the chivalry members [10].

Shahab al-Din Omar Suhrawardi, the philosopher and a Sufi (1147-1234 A.D), in his Futuwwahnamah talks about meaningful qualifications of this system: “The master ought to be always thinking about his student, whether he is present or absent” [5].

There were some necessities for the apprentice as well. He was to respect his master, obey his orders and also try hard, be honest and ask for his master's advice. “Soltani Futuwwahnamah” states these conditions as: greeting when they arrive, talking less, keeping the head down, not looking around, asking for a permission to talk, not disagreeing, and not whispering [15].

Many points are narrated about chivalry and if we want to clarify our purpose here, without any doubts, we should

accept that chivalry, having a long history, has experienced a new era after encountering industry, and modern crafts and arts. The members had to know a lot of secrets about their jobs. However, many of these secrets are still unknown and have their roots in sacred and non-secular issues and that's the basis of chivalry. There are various words and references about the membership customs. The volunteer should choose a master. Then his qualifications are evaluated and if accepted, he'll go to the Sheykh and Naghib<sup>16</sup>. He ought to convince them that he is capable of doing the job. Sheykh will respectively meet his master and in case of a mutual agreement, Naghib wraps his waist with a strap (Shad). This strap has a lot of stories, too. One of these tales talks about being prepared for battles, having stability, and achieving magnitude and strength [21].

Next step is asking for permission. Muhammad Jafar Mahjoub in the introduction of “Soltani Futuwwahnamah” says that the major part of customs about the membership and their details is not written in any books. In ancient Iran there used to be some similar rituals and customs as well [15].

In “Asrar al-Tawhid fi Maghamat al-Sheikh Abusa'id<sup>17</sup>” (1174 A.D) we can read that Bayazid (a Persian Sufi) was following Malamat (a branch of Sufism) and Abdolrahman Salmi, who was Abusa'id's master has talked about Futuwwah. This means that it existed in his time. According to this, self- denial and self- criticism is called Futuwwah when it deals with people and it is called Malamat when it concerns God [22]. This shows that chivalry had a close relationship with daily issues. Furthermore, in order to confirm the closeness of craft, art and people's lives in “Asrar al-Tawhid” we read the following phrase: “Incomparable and endless gratitude to God who has created artifacts and creatures, his essence is sublime and sacred”.

All the characteristics and necessities of a guild are collected in a series of texts named “Futuwwahnamah” (chivalry textbook. Many of these texts are still missing but there are some which can help us know about the principles. They explain every detail related to behaviors. These details are listed as: speaking, eating, clothing, traveling, having a career, etc. Most of these texts whether Arabic or Persian, are little treatises about chivalrous points. They clarify all the commitment customs and principles of a craft completely, but unfortunately most of them are incomplete and imperfect due to their writers' illiteracy. Nevertheless, these ordinary texts contain huge messages from old cultures and that's a great responsibility to discover and understand them. It should be added that these messages are mainly symbolic and implicit. Religious beliefs are very common in these texts.

During Safavid dynasty (1501-1722 A.D), Futuwwah increased and most of the texts were written in that period, although there are few which had been created before Safavid time. Their value is based on their eloquence and

<sup>15</sup> A Persian Muslim poet, theoretician of Sufism (1145-1220 A.D)

<sup>16</sup> Two officials in a Futuwwah circle

<sup>17</sup> A literary work on ethical points

excellence. On the other side, the ones written after Safavid period are weak and incorrect. These talk about legends, but the earlier ones focus on morality [23]. The texts still accessible belong to cotton weavers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, builders and a few more. Many other books are also written related to this area, e.g. "Alfutuwwah" by Abu Abdolrahman Neyshapuri, Zarkub's "Futuwwahnamah", "Soltani Futuwwahnamah", "Samak Ayyar's Tale", "Amir Arsalan Rumi", "Abu Moslemnamah", "Eskandarnamah", "Qabusnamah", "Sistan History", and many others.

So far this paper has been trying to clarify the concept of Islamic chivalry and Islamic craftsmanship and now we are about to connect these two domains.

## 5. Apprenticeship Customs in Mentoring System

As stated before, one of the most important principles for chivalry groups has always been the observance of hierarchy among the members. Khaje Nasir Tusi in "Adab al-Mote'alemin" defines the best way for choosing a master. He says that the master should be the wisest, the most virtuous and the oldest one. He also declares that art or technique needs to be treated by endurance and patience; and the student has to start learning the very technique before proceeding to the other ones... He shouldn't sloth in following the customs, if not, he'll be deprived of the prophet's Sunnah<sup>18</sup> [24]. Khaje Nasir also emphasizes on dignity of the master and he believes that the student shouldn't sit in the presence of the master.

Nasir Khusraw<sup>19</sup>'s itinerary has a story about the importance of master's knowledge: "There was a young man at school who called himself a master and kept saying that he had been Avicenna's student. We discussed together... I left there and said: He doesn't know anything. How could he teach others?" [25].

"Monyat al-Morid Fi Adab al-Mofid val Mostafid" is another text related to this subject. It's written by Shahid Sani<sup>20</sup> in 1547 A.D and emphasizes on sincerity and purity. It also has Quran's verses and the prophet's hadiths. Trust in God, morality, humbleness, self-purification, submission to God, and many others are its elements. All of these qualities show the education system in the past. Shahid Sani adds that the student should know his master as his spiritual father, respect him, be humble to him, and tolerate his anger [26].

Again in "Qoshirieh Treatise", there are some points to be remembered: "Beware that the first step for a student on his way is to have faith and honesty so that the basis can be right... and each student should have a master, if not, there will be no prosperity for him... I've heard from my master that if a tree is wild and self-growing, it can be leafy but there

won't be any fruit on it" [13].

In the second chapter of "Soltani Futuwwahnamah" the importance of having a master is again emphasized: "As you cannot pass your path without a guide, there should be a Gabriel for Mustafā". The third chapter talks about apprenticeship and other related things. In the fourth chapter dervishes' clothing is explained. The fifth defines different customs and the sixth introduces some crafts [15].

In "Jam-i-Jam" the author also has many verses about self-refinement, chivalry elements, craftsmen's qualifications and mentoring factors:

"There has to be a guide on this way,  
Who knows honor and dishonor,  
It's not good for conscious people,  
Not to have helpers on their ways,  
If you want to avoid the loss,  
Entrust your work to a knowing guide,  
A master should be chosen,  
Beside whom the one is sheltered,  
He's never disobeyed,  
And happiness depends on him" [9]  
Or:  
"While Sheykh allows you to go in,  
Forget about all your liberty,  
If you do not get rid of your own will,  
You cannot achieve perfection" [9].

"Tara'iq al-Haqa'eq" written by Muhammad Masum Shirazi, a distinguished mystic, states that the student should greet his master, sit in front of him (not behind) and not ask pointless questions. Also he has to listen carefully and never speak louder than his master. When somebody tries to gossip about the master, the student should stop him [27].

In "Asrar al-Tawhid" there's a quotation from Abu Sa'id Abolkheyr that says: "A rightful master is to have ten qualities: being taught by a master, having reached fulfillment, being polite and refined, being generous, not having any expectations, trying to advise implicitly, attempting to punish gently not wrathfully, doing whatever he orders, stop doing what he inhibits, and reminding the student of God [22]. Also there are ten qualifications introducing a seeker according to which he should be alert, obedient, witty, honest, faithful, free, confidant, accepting advice, and chivalrous.

As affirmed by Iranian traditional art, the artist is never able to create something on his own. In Islamic Iranian art two points should always be taken into consideration: first, the original idea of art creation is derived from a series of moral and spiritual values; second, such an art is transferred from master to student or from father to son based on some permanent rules. However, it doesn't lead to any stagnation or inactivity. On the other side, because of their great origin, not only the artworks are never repeated without thinking, but also their authenticity is increasing with time. In traditional beliefs, adding something to the universe is a delusion and so an unforgivable sin as creation is only owned by God. Teaching these kinds of viewpoints is the master's

<sup>18</sup> It is the way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims on the basis of the teachings and practices of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (Sallallah) and interpretations of the Quran

<sup>19</sup> An Iranian poet, philosopher and traveler (1004-1088 A.D)

<sup>20</sup> A Shi'a scholar (1506-1559 A.D)

responsibility. In Iranian traditional art, the student is aware that he cannot go through the whole route within one night and following the steps is of a great importance. This issue is mentioned in all texts. In order to clarify the point, we refer to Dr. Hussein Nasr<sup>21</sup>'s article about Sufism and its effect on music where he has defined the steps as below:

"First, soul prehension in which some part of the soul dies, and piety, virtue, divine justice and glory appear. Then the expansion phase where the other part of the soul is expanded and universal. Here, cheerfulness and happiness are simultaneously present. Third, meeting God which is only possible through inexistence and survival of the soul. Now the mystic puts secular things aside and he will be ready to meet his God" [28]. The relationship between the master and his student is based on such theories. Endurance and self-refinement, all through the way, shows faith and piety. Avoiding materialistic issues and paying attention to spirituality is vital for the student's development.

The master and the student's mutual rights are completely clarified in *Futuwwahnamahs*. In Shahab al-Din Omar Suhrawardi's book the student's right is explained as following: "The master should always consider his student's right, try to correct his errors, and give proper advice. Also, he has to guide his student towards mastership" [12].

In "*Soltani Futuwwahnamah*" we read: "If they ask you about studentship basis, tell them they are four: first, he should begin manfully for giving this up is worse than not starting it... Second, he has to serve his master honestly for a period of forty days. Third, he is supposed to be honest and truthful. Fourth, he is to welcome his master's advice" [15].

Each master considered a ranking for his students and that was chosen based on their talent, perseverance and improvement. According to documents crafts and arts mentoring among chivalry members appeared in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (AD), although our information is little about it. In spite of all the deficiency of the documents, now we are completely sure that in the Iranian Islamic art, the artist's self-refinement and piety has been vital all the time. The connection between the master and his student had constantly led to dynamism of the art. The master used to transfer his knowledge and experiences gradually, considering his student's spiritual capacity. The student was taught to ignore secular purposes and base his intent in God's satisfaction. They never focused on earning money for they believed that God was the one who helped them and made them needless. By passing through each step, the student encountered a new horizon.

## 6. Conclusions

Iranian spiritual art has always been a reflection of a higher world. The artwork, whether a piece of cloth, a tile, a mosque or a rug, contains a predominant essence. By

fulfilling the essential steps, the traditional artist is passed through a sieve from which only real seekers can pass successfully. Each craft or art is closely related to ethics and morality. Meanwhile, differentiation of art and craft is really difficult for in the past the traditional craftsman, taking spirituality into consideration, used to create the same thing which was expected from an artist. In this sense, there was no difference among smithy, architecture and painting. If we look closely, chivalry groups and their treatises have always had the same purpose which is promoting the form to the meaning. A combination of form and meaning tends to show that the one's merit should be proved. That leads to the mystic conduct of the artist who has passed through all steps and discovered some truth. Arts and crafts are divine blessings to which the man should reach. Surely, revival of rich systems like mentoring system can add a lot to art values. However, regarding the new society, it needs to be updated.

In order to find the main origins and sources of Iranian traditional patterns, we need to refer to different domains such as mysticism, literature and history. That's how we can be hopeful to elicit educational principles. The concise points and quotations stated here in this study were only schemes of a large original series of sources in this area. Apparently this can be a stimulus for searching other texts. There might be some day when we are able to present a coherent pattern for Iranian Islamic educational system, God willing.

---

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bahrami, Ehsan, *Avestan Lexicon*, Foruhar Publication, Tehran, 1985, 1588.
- [2] Wilson, Christy, *History of Iran Industries*, A.Feryar, Farhangsara, Tehran, 1987, 1-2.
- [3] Gharibpur, Kianush, *Dastavard Magazine*, 1<sup>st</sup> year, 1<sup>st</sup> volume, 1994, 43.
- [4] Mirfendereski, Abolghasem, *Sanaeieh Treatise*, H. Jamshidi, Bustan Ketab, Qom, 2008, 58.
- [5] Sarraf, Morteza, *Chivalry Treatise*, Institute of Scientific Researches in Iran, Tehran, 1991, 8, 122.
- [6] Tusi, Khaje Nasir, *Akhlaq-i-Nasiri*, S. Khoshdel, Tehran, Farahani, Tehran, 2010, 95-96.
- [7] Ibn Khaldun Introduction, M. Gonabadi, Vol.2, Elmi Farhangi, Tehran, 1987, 792-803.
- [8] Saadi Shirazi, Mosleheddin, *Bustan*, Gh. Yusefi, Kharazmi, Tehran, 2006, 311.
- [9] Ohadi Maraghei, *Jam-i-Jam*, Ferdowsi, Tehran, 1973, 120-122, 54-55, 169.
- [10] Riaz, Muhammad, *Futuwwahnamah*, Asatir, Tehran, 2003, 16, 14-15, 114, 344.
- [11] Ghurar al-Hikam, M. Ansari, Vol.1, M. Ansari, Qom, 1958, 343.

---

<sup>21</sup> An Iranian University Professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University, and a prominent Islamic philosopher

- [12] Corbin, Henry, *Traite's des compagnons – cheveliers*, Ehsan Naraghi, Nashr-e-No, Tehran, 1984, 114-116, 56.
- [13] Qoshiri, Abdolkarim, *Qoshirieh Treatise*, M. Mohabbati, Hermes, Tehran, 2009, 56-58, 22-23.
- [14] Ibn Battutah, *Ibn Battutah's Itinerary*, M. Movahed, Vol.1, Bongah Tarjome va Nashr Ketab, Tehran, 1969, 315,30.
- [15] Vaez Kashefi Sabzevari, Hussein, *Soltani Futuwwahnamah*, Bonyad Farhang Iran, Tehran, 1971, 100-101, 98-99, 100.
- [16] Ufi, Muhammad, *Javame-ol- Hekayak*, J.Shoar, Vl.1, Elmi Farhangi, Tehran, 2005, 109-110.
- [17] Attar Neyshapuri, Faridedin, *Mantegh-o Teyr*, M. Sahfie Kadmeh, Sokhan, Tehran, 2004, 167.
- [18] Nadimi, Hadi, *On Islamic Architecture & Urbanism*, Vol.2, Miras Farhangi, Tehran, 1995.
- [19] Afshari, Mehran, *Chivalry Ethics*, Cultural Researches Office, Tehran, 2005, 63-65.
- [20] Eghbal Ashtiani, Abbas, *Sahrgh Magazine*, Vol.6, Khavar Tehran Publication, 1931, 348.
- [21] Ebsafpur, Gholamreza, *History and Culture of Zurkhana*, Farhang o Hunar, Tehran, 1974, 31.
- [22] Muhammad Ibn Monavvar, *Asrar al-Tohid fi Maghamat al-Sheykh Abusa'id*, M. Shafie Kadmeh, Agah, Tehran, 2011, 94, 267-268.
- [23] Afshari, Mehran, *14 Treatises on Futuwwah & Guilds*, Cheshmeh, Tehran, 2002, 43-44.
- [24] Tusi, Khaje Nasir, *Adab al-Motealemin*, A.Chamankhah, Ruzbahan, Tehran, 2009, 54&81.
- [25] Nasir Khusraw Qobadiani. (1389), *Nasir Khusraw's Itinerary*, B. Abolfathi, Mojgan, Tehran, 2010, 10-11.
- [26] Shahid Sani, *Monyat al-Morid Fi Adab al-Mofid val Mostafid*, M. Hojjati, Nashr Farhang Eslami, 2001, 230-287 & 350-415.
- [27] Masum Shirazi, Muhammad, *Tara'iq al-Haqa'eq*, M. J. Mahjub, Sanaei, Tehran, 2004, 25-26.
- [28] Nasr, Hussein, *Javdan Kherad*, H. Hussein, Vol.1, Soroush, Tehran, 2004, 116.