



Illuminating Mysticism: The Symbolism of Light in Rumi's Mathnawi and Tabriz Grand Bazaar

Aydınlatan Tasavvuf: Mevlana'nın Mesnevi'sinde Işığın Sembolizmi ve Tebriz Kapalıçarşısı

Received: Feb. 26, 2025

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Accepted: March 17, 2025

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WOS ID: [GZA-9671-2022](https://doi.org/10.32955/neujsml2025131022)

DOI No. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neujsml2025131022>

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between the mystical themes in Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi's Mathnawi Manavi, known as Rumi, and the architectural design of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar, a prominent example of traditional Iranian-Islamic architecture. Rumi's Mathnawi addresses many facets of human life from a mystical perspective, particularly exploring the symbolism and function of light. As a key theme in Rumi's work, light represents divine presence, truth, and knowledge, reflecting the way of life and ideal societal conditions. Influenced by Islamic culture, Rumi's insights on light extend to architectural contexts, where light is used to shape spaces that foster spiritual insight and unity. Through a comparative analysis of the Mathnawi and the Tabriz Grand Bazaar's design, this article investigates how natural light creates bright, welcoming spaces and highlights key architectural elements. The findings reveal that Rumi's poetic concepts are embedded in the Bazaar's design, where light bridges the material and spiritual realms. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how poetic and mystical inspiration can be translated into the tangible configuration of architectural spaces, blending cultural identity, spirituality, and functionality.

Keywords: Rumi Poem, Mathnawi, Tabriz Grand Bazaar, Light symbolism, Iranian-Islamic architecture, Mysticism in architecture.

Özet

Bu çalışma, Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin Mesnevi-i Manevi adlı eserindeki mistik temalar ile geleneksel İran-İslam mimarisinin önemli bir örneği olan Tebriz Kapalıçarşısı'nın mimari tasarımı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin Mesnevi'si, insan hayatının birçok yönünü mistik bir bakış açısıyla ele alır, özellikle ışığın sembolizmini ve işlevini inceler. Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin eserlerinde temel bir tema olarak ışık, yaşam biçimini ve ideal toplumsal koşulları yansıtan ilahi varlığı, gerçeği ve bilgiyi temsil eder. İslam kültüründen etkilenen Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin ışık hakkındaki görüşleri, ışığın manevi içgörü ve birliği besleyen mekanları şekillendirmek için kullanıldığı mimari bağlamlara kadar uzanır. Bu makale, Mesnevi ve Tebriz Kapalıçarşısı'nın tasarımının karşılaştırmalı bir analizi yoluyla, doğal ışığın nasıl aydınlık, davetkar mekanlar yarattığını ve temel mimari unsurları nasıl vurguladığını araştırmaktadır. Bulgular, Mevlâna Celaleddin Muhammed Belhî'nin şiirsel kavramlarının, ışığın maddi ve manevi alemler arasında köprü kurduğu Çarşı'nın tasarımına yerleştirildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu araştırma, şiirsel ve mistik ilhamın kültürel kimlik, maneviyat ve işlevselliği harmanlayarak mimari mekanların somut yapılandırmasına nasıl çevrilebileceğine dair daha derin bir anlayışa katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rumi Şiiri, Mesnevi, Tebriz Kapalıçarşısı, Işık sembolizmi, İran-İslam mimarisi, Mimaride mistisizm

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Introduction

Rumi Jalaluddin Rumi, a 13th-century Iranian poet, philosopher, and theologian, has made a significant impact on the world through his profound teachings and poetry. While most of his works are associated with the Sufi tradition and spiritual enlightenment, Rumi's influence extends beyond religious and literary circles, particularly into the realm of architecture.

The intersection of Sufism and architecture reveals how intangible spiritual concepts can be transformed into tangible spaces. Rumi's philosophy of unity and harmony has inspired architects and designers to create spaces that transcend mere physicality, reaching into spiritual and emotional dimensions, (Golkarian, 2025). His Masnavi poems offer insightful discussions on the role of light and its surfaces in architectural structures. In architecture, harmonious spaces are often achieved through the careful placement of light, sound, and the arrangement of elements, (Bala and Alkan, 2014).

Light serves as a symbol of divine illumination in Sufism. Architects have incorporated elements such as stained glass, intricate mosaics, and geometric patterns into their designs to create spaces that are both visually stunning and spiritually uplifting. Rumi's Masnavi poems provide valuable insights into the relationship between light and architecture, highlighting the importance of mindful attention to light in architectural design. These poems illustrate that the strategic use of light can enhance the overall experience and meaning of space, evoking specific emotions and moods, (Bohme, 2014).

This article explores the connection between the mystical themes of light in Rumi's Manichaean Masnavi and the architectural design of the Grand Bazaar of Tabriz, a masterpiece of Iranian-Islamic architecture. In Rumi's poetry, light symbolizes divine truth, spiritual awakening, and knowledge. Similarly, in the Grand Bazaar of Tabriz, natural light creates a dynamic interplay of physical and spiritual elements. This study aims to bridge the disciplines of literature and architecture by providing insights into how Rumi's mystical understanding of light informs the design principles of this historic architectural landmark.

1. Literature Review

Previous research has extensively examined the mystical symbolism in Rumi's works, particularly focusing on light as a recurring metaphor for divine presence and spiritual illumination. Scholars such as Nicholson and Schimmel have highlighted Rumi's use of light as a bridge between the temporal and eternal worlds, (Nicholson, 1926), (Schimmel, 1978). Additionally, parallel studies in Iranian-Islamic architecture have identified the strategic use of natural light as a defining feature of spaces such as the Grand Bazaar of Tabriz. However, few studies have explored the relationship between Rumi's poetic symbolism and the architectural design of traditional bazaars, highlighting a gap that this article aims to address.

1.1. Interpreting the Imagery of Light in Rumi's Mathnavi

The Mathnavi (also spelled "Masnavi") is a major work of Persian literature written by the famous 13th-century Iranian poet and mystic, Jalal al-Din Rumi. It is a long epic poem consisting of six books and is regarded as one of the most important works of Sufi literature, (Bala and Elkan, 2014). From Rumi's perspective, and that of other thinkers and mystics, everything relies on the divine essence of the Self. Other objects and states exist as levels above this essence in the hierarchy of existence, (Nikraves and Sabernejad, 2019). Rumi believes that all physical objects symbolize spiritual elements and that every image carries deeper spiritual meanings accessible to mystics, (Goudarzi, 2011). The poems in Rumi's Mathnavi are rich with images and metaphors related to light, which have profound implications for architectural design. This article discusses how Rumi employs light as a symbol in his poetry to shape and transform architectural spaces. Various forms of light serve as recurring motifs in Rumi's work, often associated with divine illumination, spiritual awakening, and the path to God, (Pishvaei and Qayyoomi-Bidhendi, 2022). The most common interpretations of light in Rumi's poetry are outlined below:



1. Divine Light: Rumi often uses light to represent the presence or illumination of God, acting as a guide for seekers on their spiritual journey toward self-realization and union with the divine.

2. Inner Light: Rumi speaks of an inner light that resides within each individual, symbolizing the soul's capacity to connect with the divine. The process of spiritual awakening involves cultivating and discovering this inner light.

3. Sun and Moon: The imagery of the sun and moon frequently appears in Rumi's poetry to represent existential duality. The sun symbolizes divine knowledge and illumination, while the moon represents the human soul and worldly self. The journey is often depicted as a movement from the darkness of the self (the moon) to the light of divine awareness (the sun).

4. Light as Love: In his poetry, Rumi associates light with the transformative power of love. Love is portrayed as a radiant force that can purify and illuminate the heart, facilitating spiritual growth and union with God.

5. Candle and Moth: Rumi uses the metaphor of the candle and the moth to represent the soul's yearning for the divine. The candle symbolizes divine light, while the moth signifies the seeker irresistibly drawn to it, often at the cost of self-sacrifice.

6. Mystical Unity: In some poems, the imagery of light describes the experience of mystical union with the divine, where the seeker and God become one, transcending the limitations of the physical world.

1.2 Mathnawi Maulavi's Perception of Light and The Relationship Of His Poem To Architecture

In Rumi's Mathnawi, light often symbolizes divine knowledge or spiritual insight. The idea is that just as physical light illuminates the darkness, spiritual knowledge dispels the darkness of ignorance. Rumi uses light as a metaphor for the illumination that comes from understanding one's true nature and the nature of the divine.

The circle of vision of the world is your perception

The veil of the pure is your impure sense

Wash your senses for a while with the water of the clear

This is how you wash the clothes of the Sufis

When you have become pure, the veil is removed

The soul of the pure is upon you

The whole world was a light and a form

May the eye be aware of that goodness

(Balkhi, 2007), (Mevlânâ, 1987, Book Four of the Masnavi Ghazal 91).

In this verse, Rumi suggests that the light of the heart, which is synonymous with spiritual awareness, allows one to perceive and understand the world.

Rumi often uses light as a metaphor for the divine presence that unifies all of existence. The idea is that just as light reveals the interconnectedness of objects by making them visible, the divine light reveals the underlying unity of all creation.

Before, your face was nothing but light

Who is not intoxicated by your love? (Balkhi, 2007), (Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 505).

This metaphorical expression highlights the oneness of the individual with the divine, suggesting that the essence of the divine is present within each person.

Love is a central theme in Rumi's poetry, and it is often described as a transformative force that brings illumination and enlightenment. Love is depicted as a radiant light that dispels darkness and connects individuals to the divine.

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you." (Jalāl, Al-Dīn Rūmī, & Alan Williams, book, Section 10)

This famous line suggests that the pain or challenges one experiences (the wound) can be the entry point for the transformative and illuminating power of divine love, (Goudarzi, 2021).

"My head is not far from my moaning, but the eyes and ears are not that light, (Jalāl, Al-Dīn Rūmī, & Alan Williams, book, Section 10)"

"When a dog gains knowledge, it becomes swift in crawling.

When a dog attains gnosis, it joins the Companions of the Cave.

When a dog recognizes who the true master of the hunt is,

O Lord, what is that light that grants such recognition?", (Balkhi, 2008), (Jalāl, Al-Dīn Rūmī, & Alan Williams, book, Section 10).

In this short yet profound verse, Rumi suggests that the wound, often associated with pain and suffering, is also the entry point for divine light. The idea here is that through our struggles and challenges, there is an opportunity for spiritual illumination and growth. The use of light in architecture can be seen as a metaphorical interplay that extends beyond its physical properties. Light represents enlightenment and can transform the experience of occupants when combined with shadows, (Dugar, 2018). Mathnawi Molavi's poetry suggests that light in architectural structures holds spiritual and symbolic significance, especially in sacred spaces where it creates a spiritual atmosphere and emphasizes focal points. Architects, designers, and scholars have long been interested in the role of light in architectural structures. Similarly, Rumi's poetry explores the symbolic power of light, which represents knowledge, spiritual insight, and enlightenment. Just as Rumi sees the wound as a portal for light, architects may use light to transform and elevate human experiences within built environments.

Rumi's poems frequently incorporate metaphorical and symbolic elements that can be understood in different ways, and one recurring theme in his work is light. Light is a potent symbol in many philosophical and religious traditions, signifying knowledge, spiritual insight, and enlightenment.

Just as Rumi views wounds as gateways to light, architects can create spaces that utilize light to enhance and enrich human experience within a constructed environment. The use of windows, skylights, and other architectural elements that manipulate light can represent the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual awakening. The interplay of light and shadow within a space can create a contemplative atmosphere, inviting individuals to reflect and seek a deeper understanding, (Dugar, 2018). While Rumi may not have directly spoken about architectural concepts, his poetry's themes of light, transformation, and spiritual insight can be metaphorically connected to the design and experience of architectural spaces that prioritize illumination and enlightenment.

Light as an element of fog in the architecture of small and large buildings has always been one of the influencing factors in the architecture and construction of buildings and even the city. Iranian architecture has also used light as a practical element in all its periods, and natural and artificial light is used by light-controlling elements such as portico, radiation band, shade, sabbat, jamkhaneh, rozen, roshandan, mesh, etc. have been placed. The use of vestibules in Iranian architecture and the use of natural and artificial light in



Western architecture also indicate the use of light as an element that affects the evolution of the building space visually and psychologically.

1.2. The History of Using Natural Light in Iranian Architecture

In Islamic culture, light is revered as a symbol of God's existence and is closely linked to architecture, (Ahani, 2011). The word light is used 36 times in the Quran, and it has become so important that it's the twenty-fourth chapter; It is called. The famous Surah Noor in the Qur'an inspires a reflection of a divine and superior existence among Muslims. God sees himself as the light of the earth and the heavens: Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth (Ahani, 2011). The world without the light of His Holiness has no concept and meaning, and various objects cannot be separated from each other and cannot be distinguished. In Iranian architecture, the metaphor of light creates metaphysical meanings, and that is the constant presence of Yazdan. Light is always a virtue of heaven, heaven, truth, and knowledge, even if it is sometimes hidden in shadow or darkness, (Ayvazian, 2004). Iranian architects have shown the manifestation of the concept of unity in multiplicity and the return of multiplicity to unity in their works. The concept of light has evolved over the centuries and has been able to give a living quality to architecture and affect the architectural form with its softness and spirituality. Light is one of the components that come up next to other elements and concepts such as structure, spatial order, materials, color, etc., and it must play its role in design as a separate element, (Tahbaz & Moosavi, 2009). One of the most important characteristics of natural light is its sequence and transformation during the day, which causes movement and change of state at different hours. In the past, the use of natural light was one of the pillars of building construction, and without paying attention to the laws of the movement of the sun and the light of the sky, choosing the direction, dimensions, proportions, and combinations of filled and empty spaces in building complexes was meaningless. This need caused that from the very beginning of the work and choosing the main design ideas, the possibility of illuminating the interior spaces with natural light was considered one of the main and obvious needs.

Space is created not only through walls but also through light, order, and perspective. Architects have always known that they can create "space" with light and have tried to work with it throughout history (Gunawan et al., 2022). Before the arrival of Islam in Iran, religions such as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Mithraism used the allegory of light to clarify their teachings, (Figure 1), (Ardalan & Bakhtiar, 1973). According to Professor Wolfgang's research, it has been found that the deviation of the angles of the Persepolis buildings is since the first day of the year and different seasons were determined by creating different light shadows, and this deviation allowed the Iranian architect to design the places needed for living. It should be built in such a way that there is no door, but Sarpresi Sykes says Hatra Palace: The halls of this complex all had wooden roofs. Their height is different, and their light is from the openings and crescents that opened towards the east. Based on the reconstructed image of Nesa, which shows the lighting of the building by the truss roof, it is possible that the Parthians used this method for lighting the building, (Figure 2), (Tabrizi, 1995).



Figure 1: From the right side to the left the building names are ShahrBanu House, Abasi Asgari House, Fathollah Emami House, Aghaie House, Bani Hashemi House, Sheykh Fazlollah House, Jamali House, (Aamili Laila & Ameli Abdullah, 2017).

1.1. Lighting Elements in Iranian Traditional Architecture

Porch: It is a space consisting of a roof and a column that is blocked at least on one side and protects people from contact with rain and sunlight, in areas where the intensity of sunlight and heat is high, suitable and soft light passes inside. And in this case, we will have light in an indirect or mediated way, (Figure 1), (Figure 2).

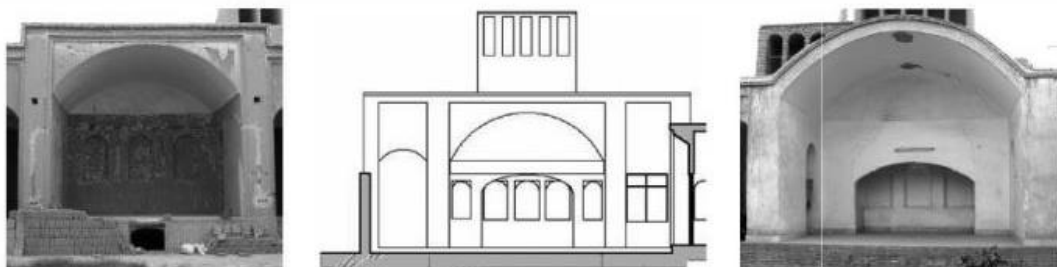


Figure 2: From the right side to the left the building names are ShahrBanu House, Abasi Asgari House, Fathollah Emami House, Aghaie House, Bani Hashemi House, Sheykh Fazlollah House, Jamali House, (Aamili Laila & Ameli Abdullah, 2017).

Awnings: Shading on the windows prevents direct sunlight from hitting the surface of the window, and as a result, the heat created by the sunlight in the space behind it is significantly reduced. Awnings may have various effects such as direct sunlight control, light control, and natural ventilation. The effectiveness of shades is different and depends on the color and location of their installation concerning the window, as well as the natural ventilation conditions in the building. Canopies are divided into fixed, movable types, as well as natural canopies such as trees, (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The effectiveness of shades element, Awning on the roof part of the buildings, (Sundberg, (nd))

Rumi's Verse:

" You are the fountain of the sun; I am the shade beneath the willow.

When you struck upon my head, I melted down, humbled and low.

My heart received the light of the soul, it opened, it tore apart.

A new brocade my heart has woven, now an enemy to rags am I at heart", (Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 1393).

Saras (courtyard) & Sardağ: These are other elements of Tabriz bazaar including a courtyard with an open space surrounded by series of Dokkans serving different functions concerning the importance of commerce.



Rumi's Verse:

*"Since I am in Your garden, beneath the shade of Tuba's tree,
I toil with fervor, needing no minstrel's melody.
Like a shadow, I revolve around the radiant sun so bright,*

At times, I bow in prostration; at times, I stand upright,"(Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 1603)

The cellular group-form structure of the bazaar and four main axes around which the Sara "cells" develop around the bazaar, (Figure 4). The shadow of the palace that was placed on top, thus preventing the sun from entering the palace.



Figure 4: Saradaq & Sabat, the shading element of the narrow street in tropical climate cities, (Akbarzadeh, 2016)

Lattice: Mesh doors and windows: Windows are usually used to provide light, airflow, and views of the outside scenery without disturbing the privacy of the people at home. In areas with strong sunlight. The window should be made according to the light intensity. Mesh windows create a balance between the light outside and the roof, a balance that can be seen from the inside, (Figure 5).

Rumi's Verse:

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you." (Jalāl, Al-Dīn Rūmī, & Alan Williams, book, Section 10)



Figure 5: The Lattice doors and windows with specific textures and patterns on the façade of the buildings, (Admeen, 2021).

It blocks the strong light of the sun and prevents the eyes from getting tired in front of the strong light. Mesh windows diffuse and moderate the strong outside light. And when the light outside is not intense, they all pass it to the roof of the room. Sometimes it is also used for glass mesh doors and windows. The doors and windows and openings of wooden, terracotta, and cast-iron mesh were blocked with oiled paper in winter and opened in summer.

Aperture/ Skylight hole (Rozen): Rozen and window cannot be separated. In fact, Rozen can be considered as a check window, which is usually used above the door and sometimes on both sides to get light and provide free air for closed spaces. In other words, the hole refers to the holes that are embedded in the stigma or shoulder of the arches. The hole was sometimes made of wood and sometimes made of plaster and clay, and it was often fixed. In the buildings that had a central and introverted texture, and enough light was provided for the vestibule from the roof of the vestibule or from other points, a hole was placed above the entrance door, (Figure 6).

Rumi's Verse:

"Don't you know yet? It is your Light that lights the worlds." (Jalāl, Al-Dīn Rūmī, & Alan Williams, book, Section 10)

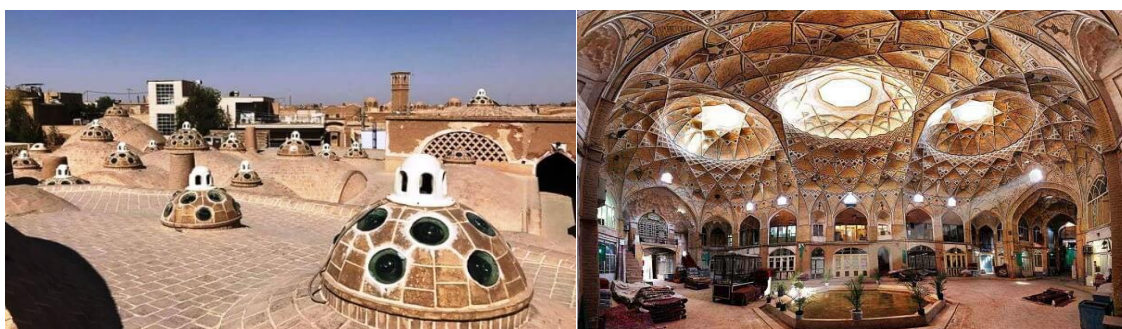


Figure 6: Skylight hole (Rozen) on the roof of the bath building, (Majlesi, 2021).

Orsi/Sash: The colored window sash is a mesh that goes up instead of the gate on the round heel and is placed in the intended compartment. The sash is usually seen in the sheds of the huts and the porches and porticoes of the cold buildings of Siri. The role of sash nets is usually like windows and wooden openings, (Figure 7), (Khojastepoor, 2009).

Rumi's Verse:

*"I lament so much with my cries, I raise so many colors with my sighs,
Until I remove from the mirror every stain of falsehood and lies."* (Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 22)

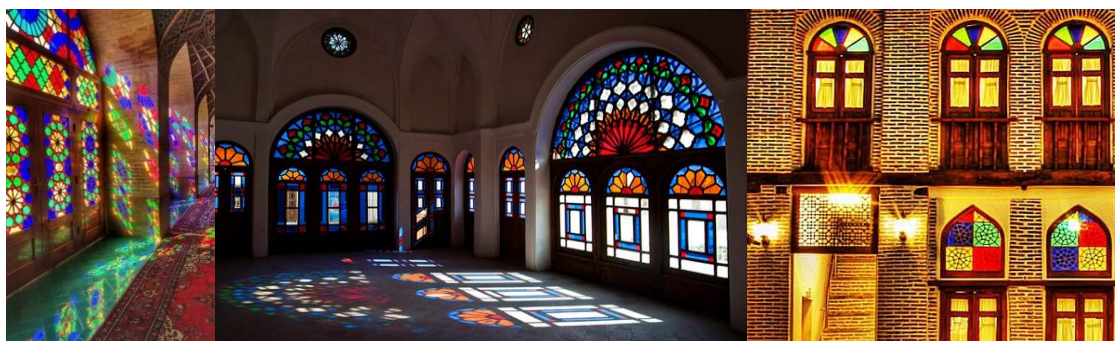


Figure 7: The color filter windows; Orsi, (Saljoughinejad & Sharifabad, 2015).



Freeze and Khonoun: Khoon is a decorative pattern created with pieces of carved brick and mosaic. Then it is dyed in various colors with soil and sirisham dyes dissolved in water and placed on the front of the building, in the middle of the columns and "door frieze". To let light and air into the rooms, they drilled holes in the pipes created patterns, and showed those pipes above the doors and windows, (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Freeze and Khonoun on the outer facade of the building, (Saljoughinejad & Sharifabad, 2015).

Karbandi and Muqrans: In the spaces where the lighting is done through the ceiling, the light enters the space directly and illuminates only a part of it. Apart from beauty, muqarnas are also used to take advantage of the sunlight as much as possible. This arrangement causes it to deviate from its path in different directions and allows it to spread inside, in this case, we will have a uniform and unfocused light inside the building, which covers a larger volume, (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Karbandi and Muqrans on the dome of the buildings, (Saljoughinejad & Sharifabad, 2015).

Hashti: One of the important architectural factors in dividing and breaking the light intensity is the entrance vestibules, which were made of walnut or rectangular, (Khojastepoor, 2009). At the top of the vestibule, there is usually a skylight that transmits soft concentrated light inside at different times of the day. Using this method to regulate and balance light and heat is one of the characteristics of traditional architecture, especially on the edge of the desert, (Figure 10).

Rumi's Verse:

*"Show your head from the window of the soul and see the lovers,
Inform the sinners about the morning drinks of the king.
From the favors of that king, who gives life to us,
Grant a new soul to the jihad, worship, and charity.
When Abraham is a helper,
What harm is there in the beheading, O heart, of Isaac?"*

*I saw a dome and a palace where our king resided like the moon,
Patterns flourished and vanished in the hidden realm of that dome.", (Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 151)*



Figure 10: Hashti provides light to the building, (Saljoughinejad & Sharifabad, 2015).

All kinds of arches and reeds play a significant role in the illumination of the roof of the building. The presence of filposh has led to the creation of three architectural distinction zones in the domes. The third area is the main dome, which sometimes had kuki windows opened in its axis and helped to illuminate the building. The invention of the arch and truss method caused the load of the roof to act directly on the joists, and the walls and arches became lighter and split. And put a window in it and in this way, abundant and indirect light is obtained. Wide openings can also be created in the four-part arch, which is obtained from the intersection of two arches of both height and width. The cradle arch also allows the architect to install a window in the space between the two arches and create natural lighting inside the building.

Rumi's Verse:

"You are the union, the water of life,

You know the plan for our salvation.

Do not depart from my sight, for you are the light,

And do not separate from my heart, for you are my soul.", (Mevlânâ, 1987, Ghazal No. 2733)

2.0. CASE STUDY

The Tabriz Bazaar, located in Tabriz city in the northwestern region of Iran, is recognized as a universal historical cultural site by UNESCO. It is one of the oldest and largest covered bazaars in both the Middle East and the world, celebrated as a significant masterpiece of Iranian artistry that has 15,000 stores, (Figure 11).

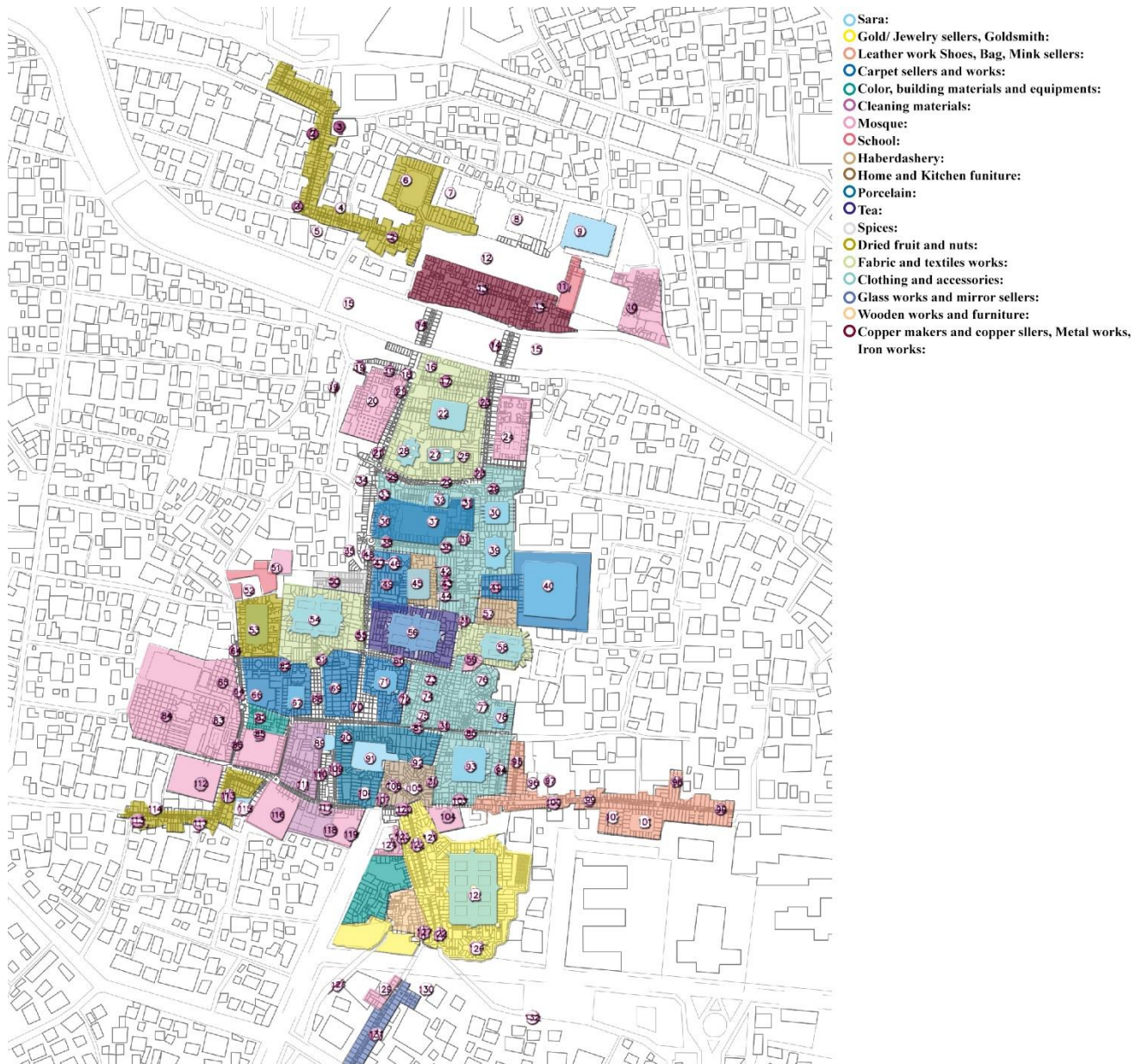


Figure 11: The plan of Tabriz Grand Bazaar, (By Author)

Due to its location in a cold climate, the bazaar was covered to protect visitors from harsh weather conditions, such as snow and rain. Natural light can penetrate the interior space through skylights, which also provide ventilation. The entrances are lower, and the openings are minimized to conserve heat. Consequently, the structural system and scale of the bazaar were designed to align with regional conditions and local masonry techniques, fulfilling both spatial and architectural values, (Figure 12), (Figure 13).

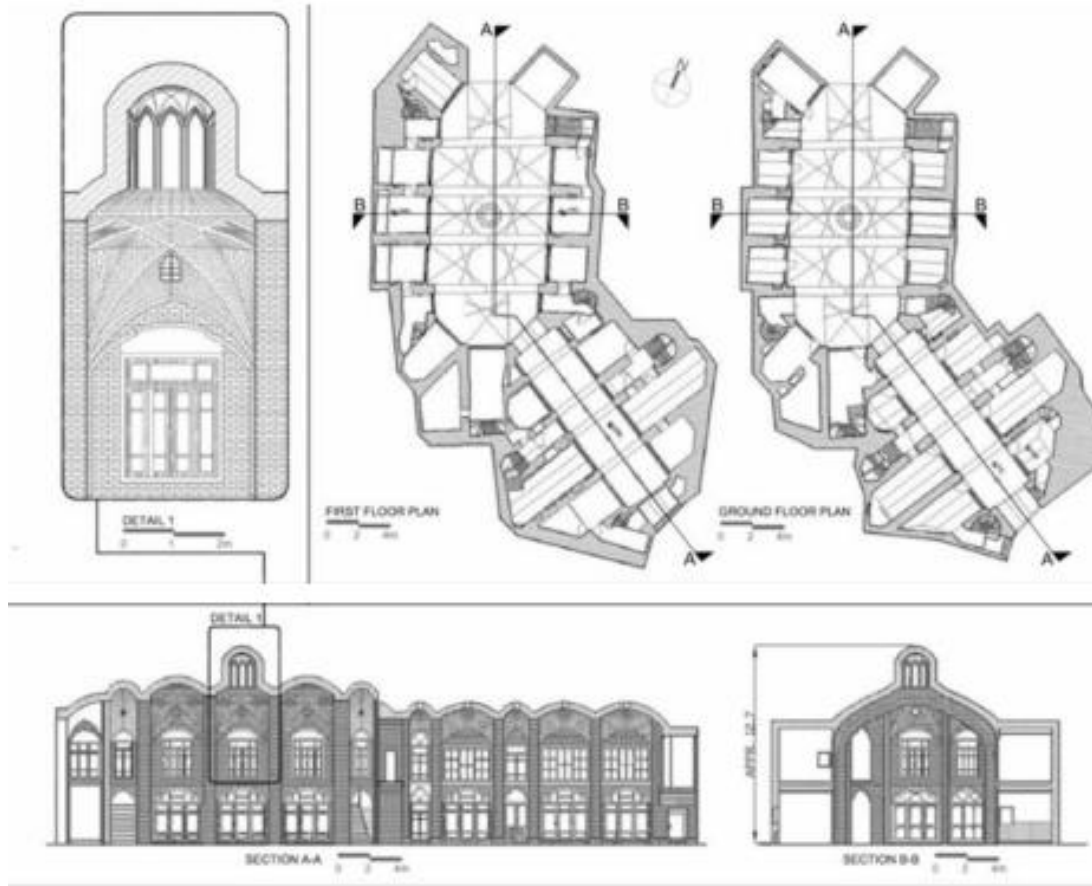


Figure 12: Domed roofs have traditionally been used to cover buildings, and have had a great effect on the reduction of buildings cooling loads, in particular because of the holes in their crowns that can increase the natural ventilation which enhances evaporation from wet surface, (shalchi, 2013)



Figure 13: The Domes Are the Crossing Point Of Two Rasteh. (Shalchi, 2013)

This enchanting bazaar shows an impressive brick structure that extends gracefully over one kilometer in length, a true testament to the splendor of traditional architecture, (Figure 13). Built using time-honored construction techniques, the building features exquisite materials, including sturdy columns and robust walls crafted from locally sourced stone or rich red brick. The ceilings, intricately finished with layers of plaster and brick, not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also add to the structural resilience, providing a sense of history and craftsmanship.



The architecture employs an innovative arch-building technique that allows for expansive areas, such as the vibrant Char Soogh or Timcheh, seamlessly combining functionality with a stunning visual experience, (Figure 14), (Figure 15).

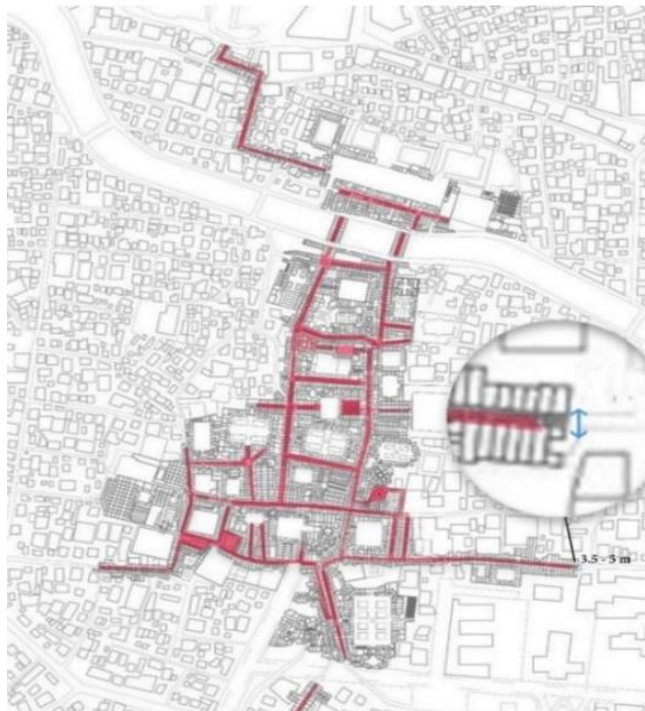


Figure 14: The wideness of The Passages in Tabriz Grand Bazaar, (Drawing By Author)



Figure 15: Dome in traditional bazaars in Islamic cities like Iran are seen from the exterior and arch pathways from the inside (Shalchi, 2013)

The roofs are thoughtfully designed to offer remarkable insulation against the sweltering heat and moisture of the changing seasons, creating a comfortable microclimate that invites visitors to linger year-round. While the flooring primarily consists of compacted earth, which evokes a rustic charm, certain areas are adorned with elegantly paved stone or brick, providing a delightful contrast that enhances the bazaar's overall allure. As you step inside the traditional bazaar, soft beams of light filter through carefully positioned skylights, creating a mesmerizing dance of shadows and light across the flooring. These intricate patterns enchant visitors and invite them to explore the depth of space. This infusion of natural light is vital, elevating the bazaar's aesthetic charm and illuminating the diverse array of goods and textiles on display. The skylights also serve a dual purpose, acting as indicators of the time of day and filling the atmosphere with a sense of movement and life, (Figure 16).



Figure 16: In Iranian architecture, the light and darkness hierarchy are used in directing and guiding from one space to another, and shows the time, (By Author)

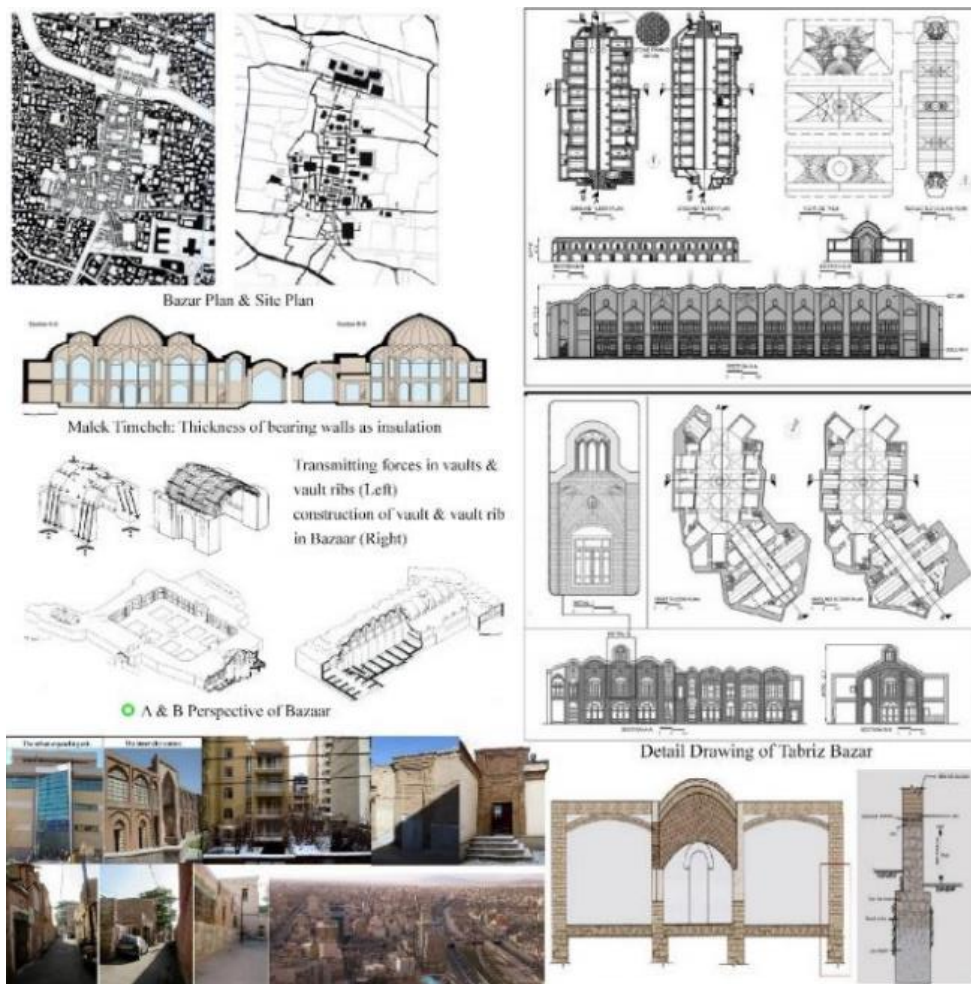


Figure 17: Formal analysis of Tabriz Bazaar, (By Author)

The low-profile ceilings contribute to an intimate ambiance, enveloping visitors in a warm, cozy atmosphere that feels inviting and familiar. The artistic interplay of light enriches the vibrancy of colors throughout the bazaar, transforming the appearance of goods and produce, making them seem larger and more abundant. This visual transformation enhances the overall shopping experience, turning each visit into a delightful



journey through a world of sights, sounds, and textures, leaving a lasting impression in the hearts of all who wander through its bustling corridors, (Figure 17).



Figure 18: The courtyard in a cold climate is usually the heart of the buildings spatially, socially, and environmentally, (By Author)

Every visitor reaches the central courtyard after passing through the corridors. The courtyard in a cold climate is generally the heart of the buildings regarding environmental, spatial, and social aspects. (Shokouhian, Sep. 2007) Courtyards are known as climate changers, allowing indoor-outdoor activities to protect the building from dust, sun, and wind. Courtyards serve as light wells in a type of building that should limit external openings. They also serve as air wells through cold, dense night air sinks, and fresh morning and after-rain air enters the building through the abundant openings that open into the courtyards from the surrounding areas. The combination of planting and water pools to create a safe and comfortable environment is a place for communication between visitors and traders. It is seen that the drinking pools in the courtyard of the bazaar are free drinking water; it is provided as a charitable foundation by religious citizens and maintained by the waqf (Figure 18), (Figure 19).



Figure 19: The courtyard in a cold climate is usually the heart of the buildings spatially, socially, and environmentally, (By Author)

3.0. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach, combining a textual analysis of Rumi's Mathnawi Manevi with an architectural analysis of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar. Key themes of light in Rumi's poetry were identified and compared to architectural elements, focusing on the symbolic and functional use of light in the Bazaar. Field observations and historical documentation of the Bazaar complemented the analysis, offering insights into how light interacts with its spatial design.

This study employs a case study approach, with the Grand Bazaar in Tabriz City as the primary subject of analysis. The method involves the following steps:

- **Literary Analysis:** Examination of relevant poems from Masnavi Molavi that discuss or symbolize light, extracting key themes and concepts.
- **Architectural Analysis:** Examining the inner and outer design elements of the Grand Bazaar, focusing on features related to light (Openings, reflective surfaces, etc.).
- **Comparative Analysis:** Establishing connections between the identified themes in Masnavi Molavi's poetry and the observed architectural elements in the Tabriz Grand Bazaar.
- **Data Representation with recommendation:** Present the findings through tables, illustrating the correlation between specific poetic themes and corresponding architectural features.

4.0. Discussion

1. The Symbolism of Light in Rumi's Mathnawi Manavi

In Rumi's poetic universe, light transcends its physical properties, symbolizing divine truth and spiritual awakening. Rumi frequently uses metaphors of light to illustrate the human soul's journey toward divine unity. For example, in one of his verses, he states:

"Light is not only for the eyes; it is for the heart to see what cannot be seen."

This metaphor underscores the dual function of light as both a guide and a revealer of hidden truths.

2. Architectural Symbolism of Light in the Tabriz Grand Bazaar

The Tabriz Grand Bazaar incorporates natural light as a central element in its design, creating spaces that are both functional and spiritually resonant. The strategic placement of skylights, domes, and openings filters sunlight into the marketplace, creating a serene ambiance that facilitates contemplation and social interaction. These architectural features echo Rumi's portrayal of light as a divine presence, integrating spiritual ideals into a commercial and social setting.

3. The Intersection of Mystical Themes and Architectural Design

A comparative analysis reveals that the Bazaar's architectural treatment of light aligns with Rumi's mystical themes. For instance:

Unity through Light: Just as Rumi emphasizes light as a unifying force in the cosmos, the Bazaar's lighting design unites its diverse sections into a cohesive whole.

Illumination of Key Elements: Light highlights specific architectural details, much like Rumi's verses illuminate spiritual truths. The interplay of shadows and light evokes a sense of mystery, inviting reflection.

4.1. The Symbolism of Light in Rumi's Mathnawi and Its Architectural Parallels

Rumi's Mathnawi Manavi represents a profound exploration of spiritual themes, particularly the symbolism of light as an agent of divine truth, spiritual awakening, and transcendence. Light, for Rumi, is not merely a physical phenomenon but a metaphorical bridge that connects human and the divine realms. This duality of lights as both tangible and symbolic—is mirrored in the architecture of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar. Rumi employs light as a recurring motif to express the soul's journey towards unity with the divine. The imagery of the sun, moon, and inner illumination symbolizes existential dualities and the transformative process of spiritual enlightenment. Light in Mathnawi becomes a metaphor for divine love, spiritual wisdom, and the soul's eternal connection with God.



- **Divine Light:** Represents the ultimate truth and God's presence, guiding seekers toward spiritual realization.
- **Inner Light:** Suggests the illumination within the human soul, waiting to be discovered and nurtured through love and devotion.
- **Light as Love:** Depicts a radiant, purifying force that fosters transformation and unity.

These poetic representations establish a foundation for interpreting light not just as a physical phenomenon but as a multidimensional element of spiritual architecture. The Bazaar's architectural design incorporates natural light as an essential feature, reflecting its symbolic resonance. The thoughtful placement of skylights, domes, and apertures creates dynamic patterns of light and shadow, echoing Rumi's portrayal of light as a revealer of divine truths. This integration of light serves multiple purposes:

- **Functional:** Ensures natural illumination and ventilation, reducing reliance on artificial light.
- **Symbolic:** Evokes a sense of spirituality, fostering a serene and contemplative atmosphere even in a bustling commercial environment.

These elements transform the Bazaar into more than a marketplace; they create a space where material and spiritual converge.

Skylights in the Bazaar bring natural light into space, symbolizing divine illumination. Just as skylights brighten interior spaces, Rumi's verse reflects the spiritual light within everyone, illuminating their surroundings.

Domes and their intricate muqarnas designs distribute light and shadow evenly, creating a celestial atmosphere. Rumi's verse encourages transcendence, much like the domes symbolizing a connection to the heavens and the divine.

Lattice windows diffuse intense sunlight, softening it to create a balanced environment. Similarly, Rumi's verse speaks to the transformative quality of light that enters through openings, be they physical or metaphorical wounds.

The courtyards of the Bazaar serve as communal spaces filled with light and air, akin to spiritual gardens. Rumi's verse reflects the balance of light and shade, echoing the spiritual harmony found in these spaces.

Awnings provide shade while allowing light to filter through in moderation. This mirrors Rumi's idea of balance—using the shadow (material world) as a path toward enlightenment (spiritual world).

The Hashti or portico acts as a transitional space, often illuminated by soft, diffused light. Rumi's verse celebrates thresholds as portals to new spiritual or physical dimensions, much like these spaces connect the outside world to the Bazaar.

The arches and vaults in the Bazaar provide structural stability and direct light and air. They symbolize the infinite and eternal, much like Rumi's verse describes them as portals to the divine.

The vibrant colors of Orsi windows filter sunlight into dazzling patterns, symbolizing the divine love that transforms and beautifies all it touches, as described in Rumi's verse.

4.2. Findings

The study demonstrates that Rumi's mystical themes of light find expression in the architectural language of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar. Both use light as a medium to bridge material and spiritual realms, reinforcing a shared cultural identity that values spirituality and community. The Bazaar's design reflects the philosophical and poetic ideals articulated in Rumi's Mathnawi, showcasing how literature and architecture collaborate to shape human experiences.

- **Unity through Light**

Just as Rumi describes light as a force of cosmic unification, the architectural design of the Bazaar uses light to integrate its spatial divisions. The interplay of natural light across the domes and corridors creates a unified ambiance, symbolizing harmony among the Bazaar's diverse elements.

- **Illumination of Key Features**

Specific architectural components, such as skylights and latticework, are designed to manipulate light in ways that highlight critical areas. This technique parallels Rumi's poetic strategy, where light unveils deeper spiritual meanings, inviting introspection.

- **Cultural and Spiritual Identity**

Both the Mathnawi and the Tabriz Grand Bazaar reflect a shared cultural ethos that values spirituality intertwined with daily life. Light acts as a medium that bridges these realms, reinforcing a collective identity rooted in mysticism and practicality.

Conclusion

By exploring the connection between Rumi's Mathnawi Manavi and the Tabriz Grand Bazaar, this study highlights the profound interplay between mystical thought and architectural practice. Light emerges as a universal symbol that transcends disciplines, creating spaces that resonate with both practical functionality and spiritual depth. Future research could further investigate similar intersections in other architectural landmarks influenced by poetic and mystical traditions. This study explores the connection between Masnavi poetry, contemporary architecture, and sustainable design. It proposes a captivating idea that encourages a transformative outlook on architectural practice and cultural heritage preservation. This approach suggests that we should consider not just physical structures, but also the stories that have stood the test of time. To achieve this, we propose infusing Mathnawi poetry into modern architectural designs, which will enable us to embrace the coexistence of tradition and innovation. This harmonious integration presents an opportunity to create architectural masterpieces that reflect the essence of Masnavi while addressing future challenges. Masnavi-inspired designs embody environmentally conscious principles and symbolize commitment to a heritage that honors our past while innovating for a sustainable future. This fusion not only enhances the aesthetics of architectural spaces but also elevates the emotional and sensory impact on the people who inhabit or visit these spaces. The architectural elements become the verses of the poem, shaping and guiding our experience as we navigate these spaces. Each window, corridor, or courtyard becomes a stanza in the architectural poem, inviting us to explore, reflect, and connect. Poetry, with its power to convey complex ideas and emotions in concise, evocative language, enriches the architectural experience. For example, the design of natural light in Tabriz Grand Bazaar historical buildings is controlled in such a way that it resonates in space. The access to daylight, the number of skylights, and the reflection of external views in the lighting of the interior space, the volume of the building and its adjacent spaces have been selected in such a way that the view of the sky angles in the section and the facade and the sky mask of the interior space have been selected. One of the reasons for this decision is the need to control glare in these spaces. Therefore, by adding lighting control factors such as colored glass or mesh frame, the brightness of the end of the space is not less than the permissible limit. Mesh frames are a practical solution to this challenge, effectively eliminating the contrast between light and glare in the interior. Through our research, we have observed that even in sunny spaces, the occurrence of glare on surfaces is minimal. This is especially useful for public activities, as it ensures optimal visual comfort without any optical disturbances. Iranian architecture has a deep appreciation for light, which is considered an essential element and a symbol of the spiritual world. The influence of Islam is evident in traditional architecture, where light is seen as a manifestation of holiness.



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