

## **The Role and Position of Kashan in terms of Sustainable Tourism Development and Future Prospects**

***Nasrollah Fallahtabar***

*Associate Professor of Geography Group, Azad Islamic University,  
Yadegar-e Imam Khomeini (May God be pleased with him) Branch,  
Shahre-e Rey, Tehran –Iran*

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### ***Abstract***

Nowadays, governments pay a special attention to tourism industry and with special measures and policies, they attempt to develop and expand it, as this industry both brings foreign currency and positively effects on the economic growth and economic boom. In our country, however there was much less attention to the cities and villages which attracted millions of visitors and their role and position in tourism are rarely addressed. In fact, the role of tourism is neglected and or it is less utilized in planning, especially in urban and rural planning. This is while tourism is the most extensive service industry which, not in the far future and faster than before, is capacitated to emerge for increasing the level of public culture, making peace, dialogue of civilizations, understanding, friendship and amity in an international level as a pioneer of or equal to other industries, including oil industry. The Islamic Iran, with all the historical, religious and natural monuments has considerable capabilities which should be thoughtfully utilized in the best way. Although Iran has hosted about 3,200,000 foreign tourists in 2011 and then has hosted 5,250,000 foreign tourists in 2016, however, we are still at the beginning of the road for development of this industry. Kashan city also has many precious sites of cultural heritage, which are unique in Iranian cities and in the world and in terms of tourism, especially religious, pilgrimage and historical tourism and considering its ancient urban fabric, has the potential to attract many tourists from Iran and around the world, in a way that this city hosted 369,446 domestic tourists and 5,010 foreign tourists in the Nowouz of 2017. On the other hand 221,739 people of the total tourists during that period have visited Kashan's Fin garden, of which 219,930 of them were domestic tourists and 1,809 of them were foreign tourists. Therefore, concerned authorities should apply necessary and essential approaches, so that this efficient and profitable industry provides the grounds for job creation especially for youths and bring sustainable tourism development for the ancient city of Kashan and to set high prospects for the future of this city.

**Keywords:** *The Role and Position of Kashan, Tourism Attractions, Sustainable Tourism Development, Future Prospects.*

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\*Corresponding author: [na.fallahtabar@gmail.com](mailto:na.fallahtabar@gmail.com)

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### **Introduction**

The fundamental change in tourism could be recognized with the industrial revolution as the economic, social and cultural changes, especially in cities which were the center for factories, led to formation of great centers of population (metropolises, large and medium sized cities), increased rural migration and reduction of the number of villages, destruction of natural promenades and reduction of the time for leisure and recreation .

The emerged complexity aligned with the aforesaid changes is a significant factor causing the incidence of psychological and mental pressures. Therefore appropriate measures and required planning for spending the leisure time, along with providing the related facilities and installations, especially in the cities, are of necessities. Thus, increasing the number of facilities such as parks, amusement parks, galleries, cinemas, theaters, sports venues and entertainment, and restoration of artifacts and ancient monuments as tourism and recreation space became evident for public view.

These conditions had a significant effect on urban and area economy and provided the grounds for job creation. The professionals and experts anticipate that by the year 2020, tourism industry will be recognized as the most profitable industry of the world.

Although the Islamic Iran is considered one of the top ten attractive countries in the world in terms of tourism attractions, however the number of foreign tourists arrivals in 2006 was equal to 2,171,699 people which had an increasing trend in comparison with the year of 1996 wherein the number of foreigner tourists was reported equal to 573,449 and accordingly with the year of 1988 which was equal to 70,407 people. On the other hand, the number of 5,250,000 foreign tourists who entered in this country in the year of 2016 also had an increasing trend which indicates a considerable increase. However, such a number is not sufficient as is the target and reflects lack of planning especially in terms of sustainable tourism planning.

Therefore this Islamic country, could not reach its valuable position in the international level due to some problems and lack of appropriate planning.

Kashan county has also suffered the loss due to the same disorganized tourism arena. Kashan city is one of the dry cities of Iran and is located in the area of the central desert of Iran. City center of the dried regions have several attractions and diverse visual landscapes which can attract many enthusiasts ( Tavassoli, 2006, 275). Nevertheless, kashan city is left behind from this path and despite of its ancient history and several historical, religious and natural tourism attractions, it is not systematically organized and therefore it is necessary for the tourism authorities to take effective steps more than before in order to flourish this industry, so the approach of sustainable tourism development in Kashan become smoother and faster and thus brighter prospects can be conceived for the future of this city.

#### **Research Method**

The research was conducted with descriptive –analytical method and a practical purpose. Considering the fact that Kashan county has a rich ancient history and various tourism attractions as well, therefore it required field survey. Furthermore, the background of many tourism attractions should have been studied which therefore utilization of library, historical and statistics was a necessity.

#### **Definitions and Concepts of Tourism**

The importance of tourism led the scientists and professionals of this knowledge to each address it in their own terms and to present theories or particular models which is important in their places, namely Gunn's model, Leeper's model, Law's model, Holden's model and etcetera.

Artuz Broman says : Tourism is comprised of a series of travels for the purpose of resting, leisure and commerce and other business activities and or to attend particular affairs and the absence of the tourist from his place of permanent residence during the travel is temporary. It is obvious that people who have regular occupational travels between their job's location and their place of residence, are excluded from this definition.

The Act of Developing Iran Touring and Tourism defines tourism as per following: The purpose of Iran touring and tourism is any kind of individual or group traveling which lasts for more than 24 hours and is not for business purposes.

Dr. Paul Pernik, the Austrian scientist and member of the Tourism research Institute says: Tourism begins when a group of people leave their place of residence for and depart for studying, research, visiting ancient monuments and similar purposes.

Some of the sociologists believe that tourism is more a sociology phenomenon. They consider tourism as a series of relationships which a person (tourist) makes at the place he stays with the people residing in that place (Novini, 1997).

Gilwie, one of the prominent economic experts in Europe, defines tourism as following:

All of the people who leave their country for a destination in another country and reside abroad for less than a year and has no source of income in the country of destination to cover the expenses of their travel are recognized as tourists.

In another definition it is expressed that: Tourism refers to a short and temporary travel in which the tourist travel for the purpose of journeying to a region outside of his place of residence and occupation (Alvani, 1994, 18).

The World Tourism Organization discusses: Tourism is comprised of activities of people who travel outside of their usual habitant for resting, business and other reasons and reside there at most for one consecutive year.

However the latest definition concerning tourism by the World Tourism Organization is presented as following:

Tourist is a person who travels to the country(s) in which he does not reside permanently and his main purpose of traveling is not conducting revenue generating activities and stay in the borders of the country he travels to for at least for one night and no more than one year.

In this regard, the United Nations and UNESCO express: Any person who stays one night outside of his home is a tourist.

On the other hand, tourism is based on the key factor of traveling and displacement, and thereby, its changes are a function of various

changes such as the ones derived from travel and displacement incentive and also means of transportation ( Shokouei, 1991).

There are over 20 verses in the Noble Quran presenting important discussions about tourism, which two chapters (Surah) are addressed here as examples :

A) Surah Al-An'am ( Livestock), Verse 11 states: Say, "Travel the earth and observe the final fate of the deniers."

B) Surah Al-Ankabut ( The Spider), Verse 20 states: Say, "Roam the earth, and observe how He originated the creation." Then God will bring about the next existence. God has power over all things."

We know that following the disclosure of the negative repercussions of urban life, planning for leisure time was placed as the top priority of the cities and this led to generation of tourism ( Monshizadeh, 1997, 59) and subsequently great changes were made in the social, economic and environmental and occupational systems( Shieh, 1990, Pg.14). Further in this regard, expansion of urbanization is considered as one of the significant reasons for tourism ( Karegar, 2007, 3)

#### **Kashan's Tourism Hub**

There are lasting and valuable monuments in terms of history, culture, religion and pilgrimage, which addressing all of them is beyond the capacity of this research. Therefore, the most important ones are studied as per following descriptions and all have the potential to emerge good prospects for Kashan:

##### **1- Fin King's Garden**

The present monuments and buildings of the King's Garden if from the Islamic era and their state prior to Islam are unknown. However, the history of the garden and royal palaces of Fin headwaters goes back to the oldest times and due to its strategic position and connecting pathways, it was quite desirable and pleasant to build cheerful gardens and pleasing sanitariums for kings and commanders who traveled and or fought the battles in those regions ( Noorbakhtiar, 2006).

As per the order of Shah Abbas the Great ( The fifth Safavid King of Iran) a new plan for a garden and palace was designed and thus the new King's Garden was fenced in the dimensions of 175 m times 142 m and circular and high towers were build at its four corners, and in the middle, a vast polo field was build, and outside the western

border of the garden a reliable and solid dam was build with stone and mortar in order to eliminate the danger of floods, which its remains after four hundred years still totally protects Fin village and the King's Garden against floodwaters . This dam is known as the Shah Abbasi dam. A tall and beautiful palace, named Shotor Galou was also build in the middle of the lot of the new garden.

## **2- An Ancient City called Silk**

Silk hills which are located three kilometers west of Kashan county, are recognized as one of the oldest prehistoric human settlement centers within the Iranian plateau. In 1932, Dr. Ghirshman with a delegation conducted exploratory surveys in those hills and after drilling exploratory holes and finding prospecting samples and objects, they continued fundamental explorations alternatively until 1937 ( Malek Shahmirizadeh, 2002) The discovered objects and monuments indicated human civilization of 6500 years old.

Prehistoric human settlements are confirmed in the northern hills with the length of 120 m and the width of 100 m and the height of 6 meter comparing to the marginal plane in which the exploration is conducted to the depth of 11 meters. ( Malek Shahmirizadeh, 2002)

The dead were buried in their private home in that era. Pottery was at its early stages and among the most important masterpieces of that era we can name the bone sculpture with a human shape. The rest of living accessories and tools and ornaments were made of granite. Two industries were formed in the second period of Silk, one is pottery and tile industry which upon invention of the pottery wheel, the clay pots were completely cooked and their inscriptions, figures and paintings were improved accordingly. Objects made of bronze and copper and the bone of animals such as horses, dogs and pigs were found in the homes. Author of the book "Merat Qasan" wrote: One of the old castles, is Si Arg castle and it is been told that the soil of that place which is the foundation of that castle is brighter compared to its surroundings and thus it is known as the Sepid Arg ( literally The White Castle) and then frequently used to eventually named it Si Arg ( Pournaghi, 2008, 245).

The southern hill has the length of 260 m and the width of 19 m. The height of its highest stratum is 25 m. This hill is comprised of 8

stratum placed on each other and is the location of the third civilization of Silk.

The most important discovery there was finding manuscript dated back to a thousand years before Christ.

Therefore it took more than three thousand years since the first date which mankind settled in Silk until discovery of copper.

### **3- The Carpet Washing Ceremony**

One of the old traditions of the people in Fin ( Kashan) is the religious ceremony of Carpet Washing and many people participate in this religious ceremony which is held in Mashad Ardehal of Kashan every year. Performing this ceremony goes back to the early centuries after Islam. This ceremony is held on the earliest Friday to August 7<sup>th</sup> ( often the first Friday of Mehr) as a memorial of martyrdom of Sultan Ali, son of Imam Mohammad Bagher ( PBUH). The next week, another ceremony is held with lesser extent as pilgrimage and is known as the Friday of Nashjaliha.

### **4- Zeinnodin Minaret ( The Crooked Minaret of Kashan)**

The Zeinnodin Minaret is also known as the crooked minaret of Kashan and its height in the past used to be 47 meters. In 1931, however, Governor General Office and Municipality of Kashan has shortened the height of this structure in order to resolve the risk of collapsing. In the past, this structure has been one of the minarets and turrets guiding caravans. It is It has been said the architect had intentionally built the minaret crooked, so to demonstrate his art and power in architecture.

### **5- Suleymanieh Spring in Fin ( Fin's Spring)**

Suleymanieh Spring in Fin is one of the few springs in Iran that is filled with water. This spring is miraculously boiling from between the fractures of gypsum and limestone mines in Dandaneh mountain located six kilometers west of Kashan, and the changes of its volume has been insignificant over the years. Fin's spring is the oldest and perhaps the first qanat and subterranean remained from the ancient times which is named and its founder is recalled in history. The water stream derived from this spring used to drive 33 water mills along its course.

## **6- Jalali Castle:**

It is one of the structures build by Sultan Jalal Ad-din Malik Shah of the Seljuk Empire (1072 to 1092) at the west end of the city side by side with the Fortification of the city and has wide walls and fences with eight circular towers . a part of southern fence of the castle which is located outside the city surrounded it like a fortification and was comprised of two wide gully walls which its remains are totally evident. By the end of Safavid era, nothing of this structure remained but its wide walls of the fences and towers and the dome of its icehouse. Then, in the present century and at the time of the anarchies of the early Persian Constitutional Revolution, in which Kashan was under the invasion of the rebels for almost fifteen years, this castle witnessed the last battle of that bloody story ( Kazemi, 2006).

## **Kashan's Mosques as Significant Religious Tourism Attractions**

### **1- Jom'eh Mosque**

This mosque is the oldest historical structure of Kashan city and has two brick domes with maqsurah ( literally closed-off space) and an elevated porch under the dome, a capacious Sahn (courtyard) and two grand Shabestan (underground space) and one lower Shabestan at the northern edge and a basin in the middle if the courtyard. Its brick minaret which is located at the south-east edge of the mosque is the only integrated historic structure from Seljuk era which is still remained and standing

### **2- Agha Bozorg Mosque and School**

The founder of this mosque and great structure, built it for the purpose of congregational prayer and a place for his Excellency Haj Molla Mahdi Naraghi, known as Agha Bozorg, to teach and have discussions . Its magnificent dome and shrine, especially in terms of the greatness of the building and excellent design and unique plan specifically in terms of the art of original Iranian architecture techniques is one of the most important structures of the second half of the past century, standing for the time that Iranian architectural principals commenced to decay.

The ceiling of its large terrace and the springs around the dome are all tiled and vaulted with cut bricks and tiles. The ceiling of its great altar is developed with muqarnas, plastering and paint and then is decorated with scripts on colorful brick tiles to the floor which are of the



outstanding tile works of the Qajar era ( Naraghi, 2003). The initial plan and structure of the dome was open from the four sides and thus ventilated, however later on His Excellency Haji Molla Mohammad Ali ( son of Agha Bozorg) built a great Shabestan at its western side which previously was connected with three great gates with wooden lattice and sash windows to the area of the dome.

In addition to and among various Islamic and Turanj designs, the names of God are scripted with Tughra and Chaleepa calligraphy on the pillars and piers of the dome ( Naraghi, 2003). This style of architecture made it especially beautiful, which made it unique in terms of type and structural state as well.

### **3- Other Considerable Mosques of Kashan**

Mianchal Mosque and School located in the foursquare of the Bazaar; Haj Mohammad Hossein Mosque and School, located behind the Mianchal School; and then there is Darb-e Yalan Mosque and School.

### **Famous Caravanserais of Kashan at the Peak of Art and Beauty**

Caravanserai (Timche) is an inseparable part of Bazaar ( Market) space and each of them has their own specific characteristics which attract any tourist to themselves, for instance:

- 1- Caravanserai of haj Seyyed Hossein Sabbagh : Located in the Bala Bazaar area.
- 2- Caravanserai of Aminaddoleh : Built in the late thirteenth century AH ( 1285 );
- 3- Caravanserai of Malek At-tojar : Built in the second half of the thirteenth century AH.
- 4- Caravanserai of Sharifkhan or the Customs : Located in Feyz Square and is connected to the Bazaar with a long corridor.

### **The Grand Bazaar and other Bazaars of Kashan**

The Grand Bazaar of Kashan is one of the important historical structures and famous and spectacular places of this city which is very magnificent due to decoration and its excellent structural plan, and is adored and attracted by the travelers and tourists who are coming in the city.

At the Shah Abbast I era, four bazaars called Caesarea including a number of properties as excellent caravanserais and stores were built in the middle of this Grand Bazaar, complying with beauty principals,

and although the operation of some is changed, however they have maintained their greatness.

Unfortunately however, due to an earthquake in 1192 AH (1778), its luxurious and magnificent Bazaar was destroyed like many other great structures of the city. Worthy to mention that there has been several earthquakes in Kashan, namely : The earthquake in Fin in 1574, the earthquake in Kashan city in 1794, and the earthquake in Ghahroud in 1884, which are attributed to the Kashan fault which is attributable to the present course ( Agha Mohammad Esmaeil, 2000).

Throughout the length of the Bazaar, i.e. from Dowlat gate to Feyz Square and in front of the Square's mosque on both sides, there are over 120 grand stores with front porch and top bar and upper balcony, and also there are several extensive caravanserais among and between these stores , in front of each other and with high roofed foursquares.

Bazaars with a particular guild in them were: Repoussage bazaar, Dyeing bazaar, Jewelry bazaar, Shoe bazaar, and Rope and Thread bazaar. Among them, the Repoussage bazaar was quite special as it maintained its fame until the late of the past century. The center and the place of the mint facility was close to the Square's mosque in Bazaar which the same area is still known as the Mint Place ( Zarrabkhaneh). Pre-Safavid historical monuments (the Aq Qoyunlu era) comprise of a pair of grand wooden gates in the Charcoal house located in the middle of the Repoussage bazaar.

There are other great and well-known historical bazaars ( which are called " Gozar" literally pass way), namely: Baba Vali Gozar ( used to comprise of 100 store), Isfahan Gate Gozar, Sarpeleh Gozar, Panjeh Shah Gozar, Gozar of Imamzadeh Habib eneb Mousa ( PBUH), and Pay Ghaban Gozar.

#### **Historical and Tourist Attractive Houses in Kashan**

Old houses in Kashan demonstrate the most excellent architectural techniques and expertise in a way that the space therein is appropriate for all four seasons of the year. Building cellars and great basements and high air vents was a necessity for cooling the heat of summer as anticipated, and also there were in- land ventilations at the back of the cellar walls with several intricate roofed places and small rooms and numerous corridors.

These kind of houses were decorated with plasterwork, muqarnas and paintings and mirror work, and also benefited from the particular art of the architects in Kashan. Some of the most important of these houses are:

**1- Sharifian Historical House**

Sharifian House is located in Sar Peleh district and its founder was Haji Mohammad Hassan Haji Sharif, in the second half of the past century of the Islamic calendar.

**2- Boroujerdis Historical House**

Boroujerdi's historical house is located in the Sultan Mir Ahmad district was built about a century ago by Haj Seyyed Jafar Natanzi (later known as the Boroujerdi) who was one of the great businessmen and landholders of Kashan for his own residence. This house has comprehensive architectural characteristics and is known as one of the best houses built within the past two centuries, and has an octagonal basin and a king's room. The ceiling of this part of the structure is like a dome which a lightwell is interestingly placed on it decorated with muqarnas from the inside. Also plasterworks are painted. Figures of Qajar kings along with landscapes are also painted on the walls of this king's room. Furthermore, the clothes of people in the paintings are all European style (Kazemi Ali Abadi, 2006).

**3- Haji Mirza Asadollah (Ameri) Historical House**

Haji Mirza Asadollah house is now known as the House of Hesam Os-saltaneh or Ameri's and comprises of two extensive yards with complete buildings and various decorations. The grand cellar and exterior yard and also the interior yard has a great hall and a porch.

**4- Mirza Abolfazl Hakim Bashi Historical House**

This house is located in the Mased Agha district and has a grand wholly painted hall with a delegate touch by Abdol Vahhab Ghaffari, and the hall in the interior yard is decorated with mirror works and plasterworks and also the tableaus are painted by Sani Ol-molk Ghaffari.

**5- Haji Seyyed Agha Historical House**

This house is located in Kooshk Safi and is decorated with muqarnas plasterworks and is said that its roofed structure was built in 1893.

**6- Haji Reza Haj Saleh Historical House**

This house is located in front of the Agha Bozorg Mosque and School and the building of this mansion is roofed and its architectural and artistic decorations are considerable, unfortunately however, this house is ruining.

**7- Haji Ali Naghi Raees At-tojar Historical House**

This house is known as Taghavi House and is located beside the tomb of Khawjeh Taj Od-din. The architectural design and plan and also interior decorations of this structure are quite beautiful and important.

**8- Tabatabaei Historical House**

Tabatabaei house is located beside the holy tomb of Imamzadeh Sultan Amir Ahmad . This house was built in an area of 4730 sqm and in 1250 AH ( 1834) by the famous architect of Kashan ( Master Ali Maryam).

**9- Abdollah Khan Ghaffari Historical House**

This house is located in Panjeh Shah district and has beautiful plasterwork and mirror work decorated room.

**10- Moazzamo Os-saltaneh Historical House**

This house is now a high school for girls with the name of Taghavi. Its extensive basement is in three floors and is built with detailed decorations and is known as one of the great masterpieces.

**11- Mirza Jaleddin Ghaffari Historical House**

This house also has considerable characteristics in its own terms.

**12- Haj Mohammad Mehdi Historical House**

This house is known as the Naraghi House and has a hall decorated with beautiful plasterworks and mirror works.

**13- Seyyed Lashkari Historical House**

This house has a hall decorated with luxurious plasterworks and mirror works and wall paintings, and is located in Panjeh Shah Street.

**14- Lajevardis Historical House**

This house is located at the Gate of Fin in Kashan.

**15- Haj Mohammad Ali Varethach Historical House**

This house is located in Vali Sultan Square of Kashan

**16- Taffazzolis Historical House**

This house is located in Paapak district.

**17- Haji Seyyed Mahmoud Hashemian Historical House**

This house is located in Daricheh district.

**18- Agha Lar Historical House**

This house is known as the Tahami House and is located in Sultan Mir Ahmad district and has an extensive rectangular yard with two story and three story buildings. At the south of the house, there is room decorated with plasterworks and mirror works and beside that there is another room which its walls and ceiling is hand painted comprised of people's portraits, flowers and bushes.

**19- Abbasian Historical House**

This house was built in 1254 AH ( 1838) in an area of 5,000 sqm in Sultan Amir Ahmad district and is one of the most remarkable monuments of the Islamic architecture. Its decorations such as rasmibandi, yazdibandi, karbandi, ghatarbandi and muqarnas and mushabak are all performed with utmost elegance.

**20- Saleh Historical House**

This house is located in Ghiyas Od-din Jamshid Street.

**21- Kashanian Historical House**

This historical house is located in the Molla Mohsen feyz Street and within the Vali Sultan Sq. District and goes back to the Qajar era.

**22- Bani Kazemi Historical House**

Located in Alavi street and is one of the attractive and spiritual houses of Kashan.

**23- Hakim Bashi Historical House**

The hakim Bashi house is located in Fazel Naraghi street.

**24- Aal-e Yasin Historical House**

Aal-e Yasin house was built within the Qajar era and include various types of architectural arts.

**Historical and Tourist Attractive Baths in Kashan**

Grand Public Bathrooms of Kashan are of the important structures and creditable monuments in terms of magnificence and excellence in architecture, in a way that they were praised by and attractive for foreign tourists during the Safavid era and they have complimented and described such bathrooms in their travelogues.

These bathrooms are comprised of numerous intricate courts with various heat and tranquilizing temperatures, also basins with very hot water to mild water, and cold water basin as well. The surface and the walls of the structures are decorated with carved stones and white marble and glazed tiles. The shape of the ceilings are like domes and there are smaller outstanding cupolas within the ceilings with several

holes in them as lightwells which were called “ Jamgah “ and “ Goljaam”. There were around 25 to 30 bathrooms of this kind in Kashan city and the most important ones are as following:

**1- Abdorrazagh Khan Bathroom**

This old bathroom is located in the middle of the grand Bazaar of Kashan and has extensive courts with several hot water and cold water basins. The great pool or “ Chale Howz” and other requisits of that era are all provided in this bathroom which are all built with white marble and turquoise and colorful tiles. The façade of its building is decorated with tiles and its beautiful frontage is still standing and running.

**2- Molla Ghotb Bathroom**

Molla Ghotb bathroom is close to the Agha Bozorg mosque and school and is one of the structures built in the tenth century (AH) and its founder was Mowlana Ghotboddin Mohammad who was a scientist and a mystic from Kashan. This is one of the very old bathrooms which are still stably standing . Despite of all the continues and general changes and repairs which were applied on this bathroom, however the master plan and the main design can be still figured by the remaining parts of it ( Naraghi, 2003).

**3- Mir Emad Bathroom**

Mir Emad bathroom is located in Feyz square and is one the structures built by Khawjeh Emadoddin Mahmud Shirvani who was also the founder of the Mosque at Emadi square of Kashan.

**4- Sarbaz Bathroom**

Sarbaz bathroom or haj Seyyed Hossein Attar bathroom is one of the attractive and spectacular bathrooms and on the other hand is beside a creditable mosque and cistern, which was built in 1242 AH (1826).

**5- Other famous Bathrooms in Kashan**

Namely: The bathroom in Sultan Mir Ahmad district, the bathroom in Taher Mansour district, and Panjeh Shah bathroom

**Historical and Religious Tourist Attractive Cisterns in Kashan**

Whereas Khashan is located in a dried and desert area with a low rate of precipitation, therefore it was common since the old times to build public cisterns for drinking water in the city and on the public routs and in villages and such was the one of the important charity works. These water in these basins used to come from the mountain waters

during the glacial period of the winters, therefore these waters were quite cold and tasty even during the summer season.

Prior to constructing roads in Kashan, there were almost 70 grand cisterns which were filled with water once a year in winter ( Akhavan Armaki, 2004).

Construction of these valuable and critical structures was first for the purpose of the fundamental needs and their foundation was for supplying the drinking water of the residences, however, their facades became more beautiful over time.

During the Safavid era, cisterns were built simultaneously with mosques, in a way that the structure of some mosques are actually built over the ceilings and cover of such cisterns, and perhaps the reason for that was for the founder to benefit from two rewards in the afterworld for such charity work and in the meantime the water would be easily provided for people. The most important of these cisterns include the following:

**1- The Grand Cistern in the Safavid Kooshk District**

Safavid Kooshk cistern is built in a way that there is a mosque above it and has a Shabestan for winter time and for open air during the nights with moonlight, and thereby benefiting the cistern and the mosque at the same time is magnificent.

**2- Vazir Mosque Cistern**

This cistern is located at the gate of Isfahan and all of the Shabestan and the eastern porch of the mosque are built over the cistern and its other parts, and is also interesting in terms of Islamic architecture.

**3- Mir Seyyed Ali Cistern and Mosque**

Mir Seyyed Ali cistern is located in front of the frontage of the tomb of habib eben Mousa, during the Shad Abbas I of the Safavid dynasty. The mosque is ruined, however the cistern is still shining.

**4- Gozar Now Cistern**

This cistern which is located in the Bazaar of Kashan was built with a mosque in the same neighborhood by haj Seyyed Hossein, known as the Attar, and the extensive three side frontages of the cistern have rooms and their facings are decorated with bricks and tiles which gives it a particular look.

#### **5- The Cistern beside Chehel Tan Tomb**

This cistern is located in the district of the gate of Fin and is one of the structures built in the first half of the thirteenth century AH.

#### **6- The Cistern of Miyanchal Mosque and School**

The great Shabestan of the mosque is built right over the cistern. However after the Zandian era and after the earthquake in 1192 AH (1813) in Kashan which destroyed many structures, new cisterns were founded with extensive frontages and mostly their facades and surroundings were decorated with manuscripts and tiles.

#### **7- The Cistern in Sar Peleh District**

This cistern is one of the structures built by Khawjeh Ghiasoddin Beyk Danbali, known as Zarrabi during the Shah Abbas II era ( 1673-1698) and there is a grand mosque on top of this cistern, which is elegantly built and can be used in both summers and winters.

#### **8- The Cistern of Mesghal Mosque**

The cistern of Mesghal mosque is located in the Sultan Mir Ahmad district, which was unfortunately ruined and desolated, however, the mosque on top of this cistern was then repaired and beautified by people.

#### **Tourist Attractive Holy Tombs and Shrines, Especially Religious Tourism of Kashan**

##### **1- The Tomb of Sultan Atabakhsh ( PBUH)**

The tomb of Sultan Atabakhsh, the son of Imam Mousa eben Jafar ( PBUH) is located outside of the old Isfahan gate which was called “ takhteh Pol” and this structure was built during the Buyid era.

##### **2- The Tomb of Habib eben Mousa ( PBUH)**

The tomb of Imamzadeh Habib eben Mousa son of Imam Mousa eben Jafar (PBUH) is located in a neighborhood at the back of Mashhad of Kashan and is one of the creditable and old shrines. The initial building of this tomb goes back to the sixth and seventh centuries ( AH).

##### **3- The Tomb of Shahzadeh Ibrahim (PBUH)**

This beautiful tomb is located in Amir Kabir ( Fin) Street and was built in 1312 AH ( 1894).

##### **4- The Tomb of Abu Loa Loa**

The tomb of Aby Loa Loa ( known as Baba Shojaeddin) is located in



the southern side of Amirkabir ( Fin) Street and has a very beautiful pyramidal dome and it was built in 777 AH ( 1996).

**5- The Tomb of Shah-e Yalan or the Tomb of Suleyman eben Mousa eben Jafar ( PBUH)**

This tomb is located in the middle of the grand Bazaar of the city and the date of 951 AH (1544) is evident on the wooden carved box which is placed on the grave of the Imamzadeh.

**6- The Tomb of Sultan Mir Ahmad eben Mousa eben Jafar ( PBUH)**

This tomb has courtyard, shrine and large porticos and a conical dome with 12 edges and mosaic tiles, going back to Safavid era.

**7- The Tomb of Panjeh Shah**

The tomb of Panjeh Shah is close to Baba Afzal street in Kashan and and it is been said that the main structure goes back to Saljuk era.

**8- The Tomb of Mir Neshaneh**

Mir Neshaneh tomb is located Paghpan district and Soog pathway of Kashan and is one of the buildings that goes back to Safavid era and the date of 978 AH ( 1570) is evident on the box above the grave.

**9- The Tomb of Chehel Dokhtaran**

This tomb is located in the west side of the tomb of Imamzadeh Sultan Mir Ahmad ( PBUH).

**10- The Tombs of Taher (PBUH) and Mansour (PBUH)**

The two Imamzadehs, Mansour and Taher ( peace be upon them all) are the sons of Imam Mousa eben Jafar (PBUH).

**11- The Tomb of Khawjeh Taj Od-din**

This place is located beside the Agha Bozorg Mosque and is actually comprised of two tombs, which one of them is the graveyard of Imamzadehs Ishagh and Abitaleb, both sons of hamzeh eben Mousa eben Jafar ( peace be upon them all), and the other tomb is the graveyard of Haj Molla Mohammad Hassan Ghotb, one of the Scholars and Mystics and Poets of the Qajar era.

**12- The Tomb of Ghasem eben Mousa eben Jafar (PBUH)**

This tomb is located in Pay-e Nakhil district in Kashan and is known as Pay-e Nakhil Shrine.

**13- The Tomb of Abou Hareth eben Jafar ( BPUH) known as Imamzadeh Darb-e Zanjil**

This tomb is located in the south of the Grand Bazaar of the city and the main building goes back to the pre-Safavid era.

#### 14- The Tomb of Imamzadeh Mir Shams Od-din Mohammad (PBUH) and Judge Asadollah

This tomb is located in Molla Mohammad Mohsen Feyz street in Kashan city and goes back to Timurid era, however, a part of the structure is built during Safavid era.

#### 15- The Shrine of Helal eben Ali ( PBUH)

This shrine is for the name of Mohammad Helal or Helal eben Ali (PBUH) who rests there in peace.

#### 16- The Grave of Abi Darda

This grave is located in Amir Kabir ( Fin) street in Kashan.

The following Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the number of the paid visits by tourists to historical, religious and ancient relics and monuments in Kashan.

**Table (1) : The statistics of the visitors to historical and religious monuments during the Nowrouz of the years 2006 and 2007**

Item	Name of the Tourist Attraction	The Statistics of the Total Number in the Nowrouz of 2006	The Statistics of the Total Number in the Nowrouz of 2007	Percentage of Decrease or Increase
1	Fin Garden	174,375	166,435	4.77% decrease
2	Suleymaniyeh Spring	14,550	28,285	4.94% increase
3	National Museum	31,599	-	-
4	Fin Historical Bathroom	105,975	-	-
5	The House of the Boroujerdiss	29,622	25,644	15.51% decrease
6	The Mosque and School of Agha Bozorg	5,675	2,560	12.68% decrease
7	The Ameri's Historical Complex	16,720	24,337	45.56% increase
8	Abbassian Historical House	15,276	19,650	28.63% increase
9	Tabatabaei Historical House	29,773	31,226	4.88% increase
10	The Bathroom of Sultan Amir Ahmad	13,300	15,760	41.05% increase
11	Al-e Yasin Historical House	12,271	12,825	4.51% increase
12	Silk Historical Hills	46,540	65,300	40.31% increase
13	The Kashan Bazaar Complex	89,721	98,690	10% increase
14	The House of Artists ( Taaj)	14,200	2,190	-
15	Other Historical and Religious Monuments	83,250	91,750	10.21% increase
TOTAL		682,847	587,652	16.20% decrease

**Table (2) : The statistics of the domestic and foreign visitors to Fin Garden in Kashan during the years 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008**

Year	2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008	
	Domestic Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Domestic Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Domestic Visitors	Foreign Visitors
1) Farvardin	184,110	1,994	197,296	671	19,259	2,580
2) Ordibehesht	203,400	2,548	90,700	1,300	242,104	2,096
3) Khordad	134,200	1,300	55,539	412	61,680	420
4) Tir	26,800	650	31,237	234	21,635	200
5) Mordad	45,600	900	21,210	191	59,936	609
6) Shahrivar	67,550	950	94,980	645	65,457	600
7) Mehr	32,550	1,100	6,905	1,115	15,533	1,003
8) Aban	49,520	680	4,647	815	20,111	1,162
9) Azar	9,570	555	9,527	386	9,500	800
10) Day	12,330	370	7,585	275	8,000	370
11) Bahman	11,624	306	7,925	190	7,000	200
12) Esfand	24,560	340	1,940	545	17,000	500

Source: Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism Organization of Kashan (2007-2008)

### **Historical Industries and Artworks in Kashan City**

Kashan city has been the center of producing industries and the cradle of the Iranian fine arts and despite of all ups and downs of Kashan throughout different ages, this city has maintained its centrality which examples of them are as following:

#### **1- Tile Industry**

Tile industry, in fact, is the evolution of pottery and ceramics industries. This beautiful industry and its products are known as tile and are generally admired by people and is still utilized in most of the structures there. The art and innovations in tiling during the Mongol Ilkhanate era are of significance in Kashan as mosaic tiles were utilized to decorate the ceiling of some domes in during that era. The examples of such include the domes of Imamzadeh Mir Neshaneh, Khawjeh Taj Od-din, and Chehel Dokhtaran, and of course the best and most beautiful of them, is the grand Minbar ( pulpit) made of mosaic tiles in the Moque of Emadi square in Kashan city.

#### **2- The Valuable Knitting and Textile Industries of Kashan**

The knitting industries of Kashan is famous in terms of history and art, and have even represented themselves in the world, which include Velvet, Zari, Tafteh, Atlas, Shawl and other silk fabrics made in Kashan has been widely appreciated by all since the old times. In this regard Jean Chardin from France and Marco Polo from Italy who both visited Iran were fascinated by the Velvet and Zari fabrics made in Kashan.

Voltaire, the French philosopher, in his book (Iran as an Eternal Center of Art and Culture) considered Kashan and its silk textiles as a match for Lion, the industrial city of France, which is globally famous.

#### **3- Historical and Precious Carpets from Kashan**

Carpets made in Kashan are globally famous and has been and is still appreciated by people all over the world since the old times. Precious carpets woven with wool, silk, silver and even gold fibers is the artwork of carpet weaver artists of Kashan. According to a survey conducted by one of the most famous world class antique carpet experts for selecting the most outstanding carpet from Iran, 7 carpets out of 200 old, exquisite and famous carpets kept by world museums

were selected, which four of them were absolutely woven by and are artworks of artists from Kashan. These carpets are as following:

### **3-1- Goldani Carpet**

This unique Carpet is kept in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. As per the comment of Professor Pope, this Carpet and the other similar carpet which is kept in National Museum of Germany, Berlin, are both made in Joshaghan, a town of Kashan. Also, according to a series of historical documents it is proven that the carpets woven with gold fibers during the Safavid era, were all woven in Kashan and in Joshaghan of Kashan, which have special beauty and elegance.

### **3-2- The Carpet known as the Chelsea**

This Carpet known as the Chelsea is kept in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London and is considered one of the most excellent carpets in the world and has amazed and fascinated many visiting tourists.

### **3-3- Shekargah famous Carpet**

This magnificent Carpet is kept in The Museum of Art and Industry, Vienna – Austria. This Shekargahi (literally with the pattern of a hunting ground) is the largest carpet in the world and all of its warp and wool and fringes of this Carpet are made of pure silk fibers and some parts of the pictures in it are embroidered with gold and silk thread and is woven with utmost taste and thus displays the taste and passion of the carpet weaver artists. What is important in addition to the beauty of the unique pattern of this precious and exquisite Carpet, is the hard and boarding work of the people who present this art and technique of this ancient and desert city of the Islamic Iran to the world arena and thus it is worthy to attempt with full force to protect and maintain it so that other countries could not abuse the gap in the market for their own favor.

### **3-4- Ardebili famous Carpet**

This Carpet belonged to the tomb of Sheikh Khani which is now being kept in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The dimension of this carpet are 11.52 meters in length and 5.24 meters in width and is known as the masterpiece of carpet weaving industry and the most famous historical carpet of Iran and is unexampled.

### **Conclusion and Proposal**

All of the countries, including this Islamic country are aware of this principle that, in terms of economics, for independence from exporting oil and other critical resources of the country, and also for stability against political changes and economic fluctuations of the international market, new methods of earning foreign currency should be developed and utilized. In this regard, tourism industry is the only economically profitable field which all of the factors concerning its reviving and development are available in the best condition in our Country, as development of tourism industry not only have economic advantages, but also have positive social effects. Job creation, reduction of unemployment, reduction of crime and problematic pseudo jobs are of the beneficial effects of such development. Also along with the jobs and works which are associated with and related to tourism, several other jobs such as providing accommodation for tourists, food preparation, retail, transportation and entertainment are created( Ghanbari , 2004, 91) and thus lead to reduced obvious and undocumented unemployment.

However, the issue of preserving environment and preventing any damage to it is important, and also organized development of tourism could be beneficial in preserving healthy ecosystems, maintaining and protecting environmental existences and environmental interests for humans ( Amin Nasab, 2002, 36).

Geographical study of Kashan region and also feasibility study of each of its tourism and ecotourism attractions could be particularly invested in, which can be considered as an economic resource for this ancient and famous city of the central desert of Iran and to flourish it more than before. Most importantly, considering numerous historical and religious tourism attractions such as shrines, mosques, antique houses, historical bathrooms, the Silk hills with history that goes back to over 5 to 6 thousand years BC, Suleymaniyeh King's garden and Spring in Fin – Kashan with special history, magnificent roofed Bazaar , old cisterns of this desert city, could become an important tourism center in the central desert of the Islamic Iran and to shine like a jewel and to guid this city toward sustainable development. The number of tourist arrivals in Kashan during the Nowrouz of 2006 was 682,847 and this number was equal to 1,200,000 during the Nowrouz of 2007 and then equal to 5,250,000 tourists during the Nowrouz of

2016, which this report indicate that Khashan city has a desirable tourism potential.

Considering the above, it is necessary for the authorities and directors of Kashan city to put much more effort and seriousness than before and to introduce and present this important historical and religious tourism center to both domestic and foreign tourists, and also put an extraordinary effort in flourishing this sustainable industry and in return to become independent from reliance on the profitability of unstable energies and to take effective steps with creating jobs and to make a developed prospect for Kashan city with their long-term planning.

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