

An Analysis of the Inscriptions in Dar Al-Fonūn

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Abstract

In the porches, doorways, and transoms of the classrooms in the historical school of Dar Al-Fonūn, the holy Quran's ĀYĀT, poems, and mottos from the Iranian elders have been written on 27 tile inscriptions. The present article investigates the application, concepts, themes, and siting quality of these tiles. The evaluations are expressive of the existence of order and meaning in these inscriptions: 1) there are only two ĀYĀT from the holy Quran above the entry porch in the northeast and southwest of the building, i.e. towards the Qibla; 2) above the porches, entry porches, northeastern porch, and southwestern porch, the application of verses and ĀYĀT is witnessed and they all emphasize on the value of the knowledge; and 3) in the doorways in the beginning and ending parts of both the eastern and western edges as well as in the transom of every classroom in the northern, western and eastern edges, expression, a hemistich or a verse from a famous Iranian person with educational themes has been inscribed on tiles. As it is known, education includes setting the ground and providing the factors for actualizing and blossoming human talents in the favored direction. Education is a term referring to the teaching of special subjects and skills to students of schools and universities such as the instruction of math, physics, chemistry, and Arabic; education also points to teaching religious and ethical matters and fostering the students in such a way that they can become great humans. Thus, as observed, education and upbringing are the focal points of the inscriptions in Dar Al-Fonūn School.

The present study is developmental research of a qualitative and exploratory nature. Library research and field study are the methods chosen for data collection.

Keywords: poetry, ĀYA, inscription, Dar Al-Fonūn School.

1. Introduction

Dar Al-Fonūn School is the eternal relic left by Amir Kabir and it has been the most important center of higher education in Iran since its opening in 1852 till the opening of Tehran University in 1934 (Ghobadian, 2013, p.145). Medicine, painting, military discipline, natural sciences, pharmacy, and others have been the courses taught in this school. After about eighty years, Dar Al-Fonūn School needed complete repair but this repair led to the reconstruction of the whole building by the Russian Nicholai Markov (Ghobadian, 2013, p.145).

In the porches, doorways, and transoms of the classrooms in this building, there are inscribed ĀYĀT from the holy Quran as well as poems and mottos from Iranian elders in white on a total of 27 tiles. The present article investigates the application, concepts, and themes and the siting of these inscriptions for it has not been explored in any research.

2. Study Background

Regarding the history of Dar Al-Fonūn, there are written works, including the books “contemporary Iranian Architecture in the Struggle Between Tradition and Modernity” by Amir Bani Masoud, “stylistics and theoretical foundations in contemporary Iranian architecture” by Vahid Ghobadian, and “a short glance at the history of Dar Al-Fonūn School” by Abu Talib Hafezi, all of which try investigating the then historical events and the plan of Dar Al-Fonūn’s building before and after reconstruction. Teaching, method of education, and learning in Dar Al-Fonūn School are among the cases that have been analyzed in the article “Investigation of the evolutionary trend of the schools’ architectural settings based on the evaluation of the role of the educational systems governing them (case study: Sepahsalār School, Dar Al-Fonūn School and Alborz High School” by Sahar Khodabakhshi, Manuchehr Forutan and Amir Sami’ei.

3. Study Questions

Which of the holy Quran’s ĀYĀT, poems, and mottos have been inscribed in these inscriptions?

What are the concepts and themes related to these ĀYĀT from the holy Quran, poems, and mottos?

How are the siting, arrangement, and placement order of these inscriptions?

4. Study Methodology

The present study is developmental research in terms of its goals it is qualitative and exploratory research in terms of nature. As a part of the study process, the data collection method is library research based on which most of the study data have been gathered. Besides the library method, field study (authors’ observation) has been the method of choice in another part of the study process for data collection.

5. Data Analysis

The History of Dar Al-Fonūn

Dar Al-Fonūn School is the first prominent building that was constructed during Naser Al-Din Shah Qajar’s era in Tehran (Ghobadian, 2013, p.68). Dar Al-Fonūn was established by the innovation of Mirza Taghi Khan Amir Kabir, the scientist minister of Naser Al-Din Shah, to teach the new sciences and techniques. Dar Al-Fonūn can be realized as the first university in the modern history of Iran (Bani Masoud, 2009, p.115) (in Iranian writings, all the foreign universities were called Dar Al-Fonūn (house of techniques) for a long time).

On the southern side of the former Toopkhaneh Square (currently Imam Khomeini Square), there was a vast piece of land wherein the soldiers were taught military lessons. Amir Kabir found this land which was close to the royal palaces appropriate for making a school and the construction work was commenced in 1850 (1266 lunar calendar) with the agreement of Naser Al-Din Shah who was a 20-year-old king at that time. The map of this building was drawn by Engineer Mirza Reza. He was one of the five learners who had been sent to England by the order of prince, Abbas Mirza, and schooled in engineering for the construction of fortress and military strongholds therein (Safa Manesh, 1999, p.251). Mirza Reza’s map was drawn under the influence of the map for the edifice called “Willich Infantry” in England and Muhammad Taghi, the architect, who was the maternal-grandfather of Kamran Mirza, son of Naser Al-Din Shah, was commissioned to its construction. The eastern building of Dar Al-Fonūn was finished and put to use till late 1851 (1267 lunar calendar). The rest of the building, as well, was completed in early 1852 (1269 lunar calendar). On the four sides of the schoolyard, there were built fifty engraved and gilded rooms, and wide porches were built in front of them. On the southern edge of the schoolyard, a theatrical hall was constructed. There was a large pond in the middle of the yard with land plots planted with fruit trees in its periphery (Hafezi, 2015, p.9).



Image (1): learners of Dar Al-Fonun School in the yard of its early building
(Source: Semsar and Sara'eiyan, 2008, p.153)

After about eighty years, Dar Al-Fonun School needed complete repair but it led to the reconstruction of the whole edifice by the Russian Nicholai Markov. The new building is still in the form of a central yard system with the classrooms and halls being positioned on its periphery but the European façades of Mirza Reza were completely changed and Markov used completely traditional signs and symbols instead. All of the arches are V-shaped and the decorations are in the form of colorful (seven colors) tiles with arabesque images and Chinese knots. The cymatium is stretched over the entire length of the walls in the periphery of the yard as well as the transom of the entry gate and the chapters or capitals are in honeycomb or stalactite vaulting form similar to Safavid era columns (Ghobadian, 2013, p.145).

The school's building has been constructed on two floors on a rectangular land. In the apices of all four sides, four spiral stairways connect the lower floor to the upper floor. The school has 32 classrooms in total with 12 of them being situated on the two floors on the eastern edge the same number of classrooms is positioned on two floors on the western edge and eight classes are located on two floors on the northern edge. On the southern edge of the building, theater and dining halls have been situated. The theater is 13×27 square meters in dimensions and it is the biggest covered space in Dar Al-Fonun Complex. The dining hall, the second covered space, is 13×19 square meters in dimensions.

In Dar Al-Fonun, the teachers were foreign professors and some Iranians who had been educated abroad. The change in the education method drawn on the West's education system is the product of the aforesaid professors. The professors each taught a certain lesson (Khodabakhshi et al., 2015, p.70).

Teaching is shifted from generalities to details. The testimony to this claim is the existence of a special classroom bearing the foresaid title and it has been like an "engineering room" (Darani, 1997, p.130). The lessons taught in Dar Al-Fonun were comprised of subjective and objective (applied) materials at high school and university levels (Zamiri, 1994, p.158). The lesson materials have become more specialized and the applied sciences were placed amongst the lessons due to the time's conditions. The primary courses were cavalry, engineering, math, map drawing, mining and mineralogy, physics and foreign alchemy, pharmacy, medicine and autopsy and surgery,

history and geography, and foreign languages (Adamiyat, 1969, p.348). The diverse lesson materials and, especially, the applied lessons caused the creation of novel spaces like workshops and laboratories in the school.



Image (2): Aerial photo of the new and current building of Dar Al-Fonun School
(Source: <http://darolfonoon.oerp.ir/content>)



Image (3): Yard of the new and current building of Dar Al-Fonun (Source: Authors)

Dar Al-Fonun School kept on its activities till 1985 and it was afterward used as a center for training teachers and also as a center for the in-service higher education of the education ministry affiliates for a while. After the termination of the civil reconstruction operation, it was put to use as the “document treasure and center of education ministry”.

Inscriptions in Dar Al-Fonun:

Dar Al-Fonun School's gates were opened towards Bab Homayun Street. In 1913, the entry gate of the building was translocated to the northeastern side of the school and opened towards Naser Khosrow Street. In Markov's plan, the same route had been designated as the primary entry into the school. The gate has been made based on traditional architectural methods and it has a high wall. On the two sides of the entry gate, two silvery cylindrical columns support the roof of this gate. Right above the two-part door, the term “Dar Al-Fonun” has been written in a beautiful calligraphic style on the transom of the entry gate. The year “1268 lunar calendar” has been written on its side on another tile. Moreover, a well-known verse from Ferdowsi is seen above the high porch on a colorful tile with an arabesque design: 1) “Mighty is he who knows/the heart of an old man is young by knowledge”.



Image (4): Inscriptions in the northern edge of the interior body of Dar Al-Fonun School
(Source: Authors)



Image (5): Inscriptions on the western edge of the internal yard in Dar Al-Fonun School
(Source: Authors)

The exterior façade of Dar Al-Fonun School is made of bricks with honeycomb vaulting above the walls. Besides these brief brick ornamentations, there are poems and mottos from Iranian elders written in white within the format of turquoise tiles installed underneath the honeycomb vaulting. In the middle of the two northern and southern edges of the school, there are two symmetrical doorways. The northern doorway enables access to the land behind the telecommunication building and the southern doorway provides access to theater and dining halls. Underneath the roofs of these two doorways, there are seen brief decorative tilework. There is an alcove above the northern doorway and its window is in the upper section of the doorway and opens towards the green and pleasant space of the yard. The tile frames above these two doorways are the biggest in the whole precinct and they have been decorated with two ĀYĀT from the holy Quran. On the frame of the northern doorway, a part of the ĀYA nine of SŪRAH ZOMAR has been written: 4) “Hall Yastawā Al-Lazina Ya’alamūn wa Al-Lazina Lā Ya’alamūn” meaning “are those who know equal to those who do not know?”; and, a part of ĀYA 269 of SŪRAH AL-BAQARAH has been

written on the frame above the southern doorway: 27) “Wa Man Yo’t Al-Hekmah Fa Qad Ūtiya Khairan Kathirā” meaning “and, he who has been given knowledge and wisdom [by God] has certainly been given much good”. At the beginning and ending parts of the doorways on both the eastern and western edges, there are four verses from Ferdowsi’s poems inscribed on tiles, including the following:

Western edge: 7) “DO not annoy the seed-carrying ant/for it has life and the sweet life is pleasant”

16) “Do not put learning away even for an instant/if you wish to illuminate your soul”

Eastern edge: 17) “he who thinks maliciously/will eventually have a bad ending awaiting his body”

26) “A man will be truthful out of powerfulness/falsehood and shortage come from looseness”

In addition, in the transom of every classroom on the northern, western, and eastern edges and a rectangular frame of beautifully colored turquoise tiles, an expression or a hemistich from a well-known Iranian figure has been written in calligraphic style. The façade of the northern edge from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School:

2) Attar:

“Endeavor is the wing and feather of the bird of souls”

3) Sana’ei:

“Science and wisdom are the perfection goals of mankind”

5) Rudaki:

“Do not treat others badly if you do not want them to treat you badly”

6) Anushirvan:

“Be industrious so that you can be prosperous”

8) Mowlavi:

“Intellects are assisted by intellects”

9) Ardashir Babakan:

“Everything needs wisdom and the wisdom needs test”

10) Afzal Al-Din Kashani

“You are what you are searching for”

11) Sa’adi

“The offspring of Adam are members of a community”

12) Ferdowsi:

“Demand world as you want your own body”

13) Ferdowsi:

“The backbone of wisdom is forbearance”

14) Ferdowsi:

“It is by the culture that the psyche becomes healthy”

15) Asadi

“Do not spend your time exhibiting the deeds of hyenas”

The façade of the eastern edge from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School:

18) Sa’adi:

“First think then talk”

19) Asadi

“Nobody except magnanimous men rose from Iran”

20) Mowlavi

“Do not think you can escape the outcome of your actions”

21) Sana’ei:

“Man is he who could recognize himself”

22) Hafiz:

“Patience and evasion are both old friends”

23) Ferdowsi:

“Art is possessed by Iranians and no one else”

24) Ferdowsi:

“Do not postpone your today’s tasks to tomorrow”

25) Nezami:

“Be the child of your qualities”



Image (6): Siting of ĀYĀT, poems, and sentences on the building’s porch opening to Naser Khosrow Street (Source: Authors)

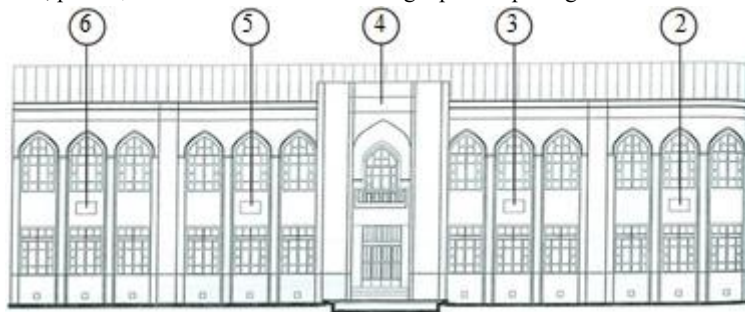


Image (7): Siting of ĀYĀT, poems, and sentences in the façade of the northern edge’s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School (Source: Authors)

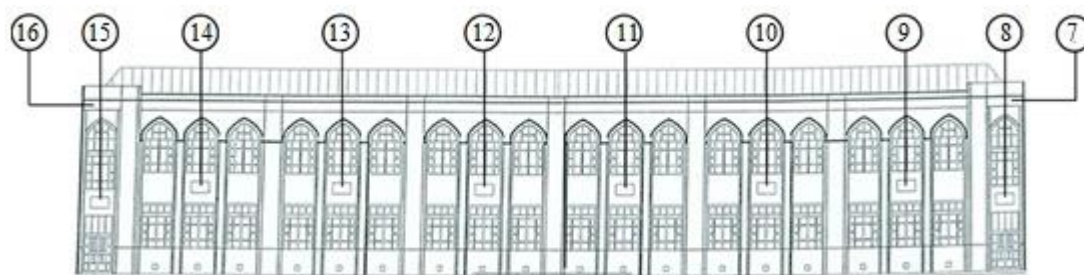


Image (8): Siting of ĀYĀT, poems, and sentences in the façade of the western edge's interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School (Source: Authors)

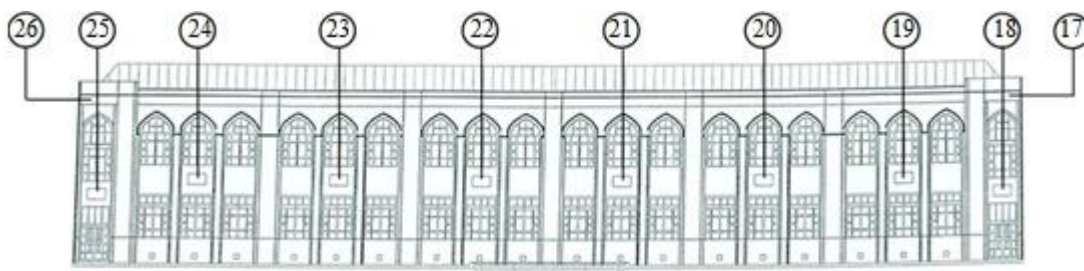














Image (9): Siting of ĀYĀT, poems, and sentences in the façade of the eastern edge's interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School (Source: Authors)

Table 1: Inscriptions in the transom between the first and second floors (Source: Authors)

	Inscription text	Inscription
façade of the northern edge's interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School	2) Attar: "Endeavor is the wing and feather of the bird of souls"	
	3) Sana'ei: "Science and wisdom are the perfection goals of mankind"	
	5) Rudaki: "Do not treat others badly if you do not want them to treat you badly"	
	6) Anushirvan: "Be industrious so that you can be prosperous"	

8) Mowlavi: "Intellects are assisted by intellects"	
9) Ardashir Babakan: "Everything needs wisdom and the wisdom needs test"	
10) Afzal Al-Din Kashani "You are what you are searching for"	
11) Sa'adi "The offspring of Adam are members of a community"	
12) Ferdowsi: "Demand world as you want your own body"	
13) Ferdowsi: "The backbone of wisdom is forbearance"	
14) Ferdowsi: "It is by the culture that the psyche becomes healthy"	
15) Asadi "Do not spend your time exhibiting the deeds of hyenas"	







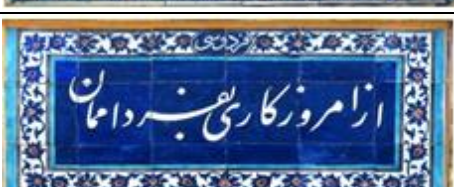








façade of the eastern edge' s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School	18) Sa'adi: "First think then talk"	
	19) Asadi "Nobody except magnanimous men rose from Iran"	
	20) Mowlavi "Do not think you can escape the outcome of your actions"	
	21) Sana'ei: "Man is he who could recognize himself"	
	22) Hafiz: "Patience and evasion are both old friends"	
	23) Ferdowsi: "Art is possessed by Iranians and no one else"	
	24) Ferdowsi: "Do not postpone your today's tasks to tomorrow"	
	25) Nezami: "Be the child of your qualities"	

Table 2: inscriptions on the entry gates (Source: Authors)

Façade	Position	Inscription text
		Inscription
Façade of the main body of the school from Naser Khosrow Street	Above the main entry porch/entry doorway	1) Ferdowsi: “Mighty is he who knows/the heart of an old man is young by knowledge”.
		
Façade of the northern edge from inside the yard	Above the northern porch/entry doorway	4) “Hall Yastawā Al-Lazina Ya’alamūn wa Al-Lazina Lā Ya’alamūn” meaning “are those who know equal to those who do not know?”
		
Façade of the southern edge from inside the yard	Above the southern porch/entry doorway	27) “Wa Man Yo’t Al-Hekmah Fa Qad Ūtiya Khairan Kathirā” meaning “and, he who has been given knowledge and wisdom [by God] has certainly been given much good”.
		
Façade of the western edge from inside the yard	Above the entry doorway	7) “do not annoy the seed-carrying ant/for it has life and the sweet life is pleasant”
		
	Above the entry doorway	16) “Do not put learning away even for an instant/if you wish to illuminate your soul”
		
Façade of the eastern edge from inside the yard	Above the entry doorway	17) “he who thinks maliciously/will eventually have a bad ending awaiting his body”
		
	Above the entry doorway	26) “A man will be truthful out of powerfulness/falsehood and shortage come from looseness”
		

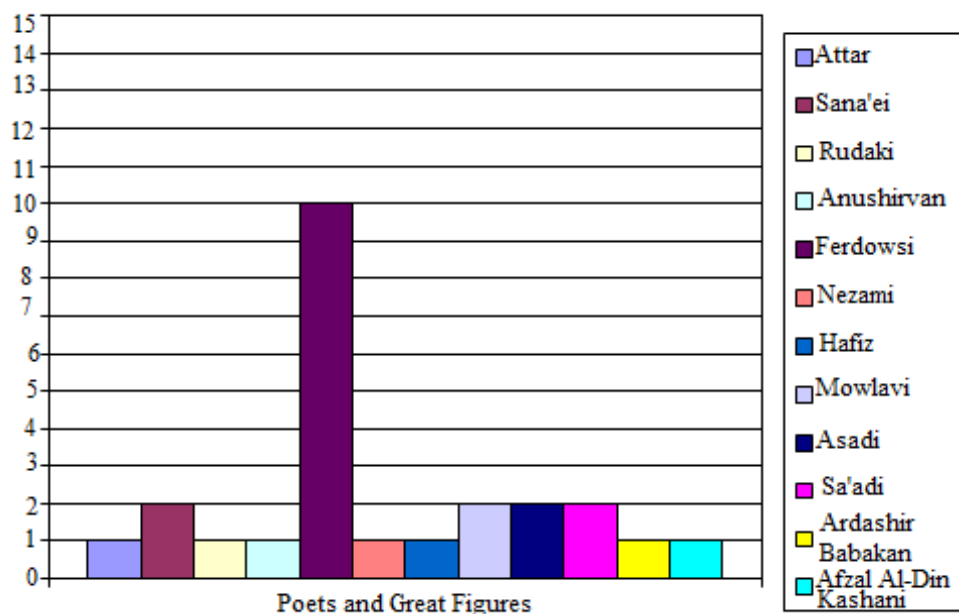


Diagram (1): an analysis of the application frequency of the great Iranian elders' sentences or poems (Source: Authors)

Table 3: An analysis of inscriptions on the entry gates of Dar al-Fonun school (Source: Authors)

Façade	Inscription	Original poem	Source	concept
Façade of the northern edge's main body from inside the yard	1) "Mighty is he who knows/the heart of an old man is young by knowledge".	"Mighty is he who knows/the heart of an old man is young by knowledge".	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/beginning of the book/part 1 beginning of the book	Valuableness of the knowledge
	7) "Do not annoy the seed-carrying ant/for it has life and the sweet life is pleasant"	"Do not annoy the seed-carrying ant/for it has life and the sweet life is pleasant"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Freydun/part 10	Exercising benevolence towards the weak
	16) "Do not put learning away even for an instant/if you wish to illuminate your soul"	"Do not put learning away even for an instant/if you wish to illuminate your soul"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Ardashir's kingship/part 11	Keeping on learning
	17) "He who thinks maliciously/will eventually have a bad ending awaiting his body"	"He who thinks maliciously/will eventually have a bad ending awaiting his body"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Kingship of Kasra Nushin Rawan lasted 48 years/part 1-beginning of the story	The bad ending of the malevolence
	26) "A man will be truthful out of powerfulness/falsehood and shortage come from looseness"	"A man will be truthful out of powerfulness/falsehood and shortage come from looseness"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Kingship of Kasra Nushin Rawan lasted 48 years/part 3 the story of Buzarjmehr	The necessity for strengthening the physical vigor

Table 4: analysis of the inscriptions in the northern edge's interior body in Dar Al-Fonūn School (Source: Authors)

Façade	Inscription	Original poem	Source	Concept
Façade of the northern edge's interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School	2) "Endeavor is the wing and feather of the bird of souls"	"Ambition is the seed of the world's kingdom/ Endeavor is the wing and feather of the bird of souls"	Attar (1146-1221)-Mantiq Al-Tair/bird's carving of an excuse/the government that could find the magicians of Pharaoh"	Valuableness of ambition
	3) "Science and wisdom are the perfection goals of mankind"	"Anger and lust are the beauties of animals/science and wisdom are the perfections of humans"	Sana'ei (1081-1151)	Attaining perfection by wisdom and science
	5) "Do not mistreat others if you do not want them to treat you badly"	"How beautifully the mercenary spoke to that lady/ Do not mistreat others if you do not want them to treat you badly"	Rudaki (859-941)-Rudaki's book of poetry/chapter five/sporadic verses from the Masnavi with convergent prosody/part 21	Exercising goodness toward others
	6) "Be industrious so that you can be prosperous"	"Be industrious so that you can be prosperous"	Anushirvan (501-579)	Making efforts to bring prosperity

Table 5: analysis of the inscriptions on the western edge's interior body from inside Dar Al-Fonūn School (Source: Authors)

Façade	Inscription	Original poem	Source	Concept
Façade of the western edge's interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School	8) "Intellects assist intellects"	"Consultation gives perception and consciousness/intellects are assisted by intellects"	Mowlavi (1208-1274)-Masnavi Ma'anavi/book one/part 57/hunts' inquiry of the rabbit about its thought	Asking for advice before doing anything
	9) "Everything needs wisdom and wisdom needs test"	-----	Ardashir Babakan (180-242)	Obliging examination
	10) "You are what you are searching for"	"Hear the absolute rule all at once from me/ You are what you are searching for"	Afzal Al-Din Kashani (first half of the 12 th century-about 1214)-Baba Afzal Book of Poems/couplet poems of wandering	Finding goals and position of objectives
	11) "The offspring of Adam are members of a community"	"The offspring of Adam are members of a community/for they share one gem in creation"	Sa'adi (1176 to 1210-1291 to 1296)-Golestan/chapter one on the kings' way of conduct/story no.10	solidarity
	12) "Demand world as you want your own body"	"He told him to go away and stay distant/demand the world as you want your body"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Kingship of Kasra Nushin Rawan lasted 48 years/part 3 the story of Buzarjmehr	Treating others like one's own self
	13) "The backbone of wisdom is forbearance"	"The backbone of wisdom is forbearance/exercising harshness causes the humiliation of the body"	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Kingship of Ghobad lasted 43 years/part 1-Kingship of Ghobad lasted 43 years	Exercising forbearance
	14) "It is by the culture that the psyche becomes healthy"	"Gem is inferior and humiliated and loose without art/ It is by the culture that the	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/ Kingship of Kasra Nushin Rawan lasted 48	Valuableness of culture

		psyche becomes healthy”	years/part 5- the battle between the Kahn of China and Hephthalite	
	15) “Do not spend your time exhibiting the deeds of hyenas”	“Do not spend your time exhibiting the deeds of hyenas/do not say what you know about”	Asadi Tusi (1000-1073)-Garshasp Nameh/Athrat’s advising of Garshasp	Value of the words in practice

Table 5: analysis of the inscriptions on the eastern edge’s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School
(Source: Authors)

Façade	Inscription	Original poem	Source	Concept
Façade of the eastern edge’ s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School	18) “First think then talk”	“First think then talk/foundation has been made first and then the wall”	Sa’adi (1176 to 1210-1291 to 1296)-Golestan/preface	Thinking before speaking
	19) “Nobody except magnanimous men rose from Iran”	“Nobody except magnanimous men rose from Iran/he who wanted slaves bought them from you”	Asadi Tusi (1000-1073)-Garshasp Nameh/Garshasp’s letter to China’s king	magnanimity
	20) “Do not think you can escape the outcome of your actions”	“Do not think you can escape the outcome of your actions/wheat grows from wheat and barley from barley”	Mowlavi (1208-1274)-Masnavi Ma’anavi/book two	Paying attention to the outcomes of actions
	21) “Man is he who could recognize himself”	“In this path which is the path of the magnanimous men/ Man is he who could recognize himself”	Sana’ei (1081-1151), Poetry Book of Hakim Sana’ei	Valuableness of self-recognition
	22) “Patience and evasion are both old friends”	“Patience and evasion are both old friends/the turn will come for victory as a result of patience”	Hafiz (1326-1390), sonnets/sonnet no.232	Forbearance and victory’s relatedness
	23) “Art is possessed by Iranians and no one else”	“Art is possessed by Iranians and no one else/there is nobody like a furious rhinoceros amongst them”	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/kingship of Bahram Gor /part 38	Iranians’ skillfulness in art
	24) “Do not postpone your today’s tasks to tomorrow”	“Do not postpone your today’s tasks to tomorrow/for nobody knows what tomorrow will turn out”	Ferdowsi (941-1026)-Shahnameh/Kingship of Kasra Nushin Rawan lasted 48 years/part 1-beginning of the story	Avoidance of hesitation
	25) “Be the child of your qualities”	“Be an army-defeater like a lion/be the child of your qualities”	Nezami (1026-1143)/Khamseh/Laili and Majnoun/part 9-in advising his child, Muhammad Nezami	Reliance on one’s self

6. Discussion and Conclusion

It was observed that there are written ĀYĀT from holy Qurans and poems and mottos from the great Iranian persons in white color in a total of 27 tile inscriptions in the porches, doorways, and transoms of the classrooms in the new building of Dar Al-Fonūn School. Above the high-rising porch and on a colorful tile with an arabesque design, this

famous verse from Ferdowsi has been seen: 1) “Mighty is he who knows/the heart of an old man is young by knowledge”.

Above the northeastern and southwestern entry porches that face the Qibla, two ĀYĀT from the holy Quran exist and they both emphasize the valuable-ness of knowledge. On the frame of the northern porch, part of the ĀYA 9 of SŪRAH ZOMAR has been written: 4) “Hall Yastawā Al-Lazina Ya’alamūn wa Al-Lazina Lā Ya’alamūn” meaning “are those who know equal to those who do not know?”; and, on the frame on top of the southern doorway, part of ĀYA 269 of SŪRAH BAQARAH has been written: 27) “Wa Man Yo’t Al-Hekmah Fa Qad Ūtiya Khairan Kathirā” meaning “and, he who has been given knowledge and wisdom [by God] has certainly been given much good”.

In the beginning and ending parts of the doorways on the eastern and western edges, four verses from Ferdowsi’s poems have been inscribed on tiles: 7) “Do not annoy the seed-carrying ant/for it has life and the sweet life is pleasant”; 16) “Do not put learning away even for an instant/if you wish to illuminate your soul”; eastern edge: 17) “he who thinks maliciously/will eventually have a bad ending awaiting his body”; and, 26) “a man will be truthful out of powerfulness/falsehood and shortage come from looseness”. These verses respectively incorporate different themes like exercising benevolence towards the weak, keeping on learning, the outcome of maliciousness, and the necessity of strengthening physical power.

Additionally, in the transoms of every classroom in the northern, western, and eastern edges and a rectangular frame of beautiful turquoise tiles, expressions or a hemistich of a poem by one of the great Iranian figures such as Attar, Sana’ei, Rudaki, Anushirvan, Mowlavi, Ardashir Babakan, Afzal Al-Din Kashani, Sa’adi, Ferdowsi, Asadi Tusi, Sa’adi, Hafiz and Nezami is seen in calligraphic style:

The transoms of the classrooms in the northern edge’s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School carry the following sentences: 2) Attar: “Ambition is the wing and feather of the birds of souls”; 3) Sana’ei: “Science and wisdom are the human beings’ perfection goals”; 5) Rudaki: “Do not mistreat others if you do not want them to treat badly”; and, 6) Anushirvan: “be industrious so that you can be prosperous”. These expressions and hemistichs respectively contain different themes like the valuableness of ambition, humans’ search for perfection through science and wisdom, treating others benevolently, and making efforts for prosperity.

The transoms of the classrooms in the western edge’s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School have the following inscriptions: 8) Mowlavi: “intellects assist intellects”; 9) Ardashir Babakan: “Everything needs wisdom and wisdom needs test”; 10) Afzal Al-Din Kashani: “you are what you are searching for”; 11) Sa’adi: “the offspring of Adam are members of a community”; 12) Ferdowsi: “demand the world as you want your own body”; 13) Ferdowsi: “forbearance is the backbone of wisdom”; 14) Ferdowsi: “It is by the culture that the psyche becomes healthy”; and, 15) Asadi: “Do not spend your time exhibiting the deeds of hyenas”. These expressions and hemistichs respectively convey different themes like consultation, the necessity of examination, seeking goals and position of objectives, solidarity, treating others like one’s own self, forbearance, valuableness of culture, and value of practice words.

The transoms of the classrooms on the eastern edge’s interior body from inside the yard of Dar Al-Fonūn School encompass the following inscriptions: 18) Sa’adi: “first think, then talk”; 19) Asadi: “nobody except magnanimous men rose from Iran”; 20) Mowlavi: “Do not think you can escape the outcome of your actions”; 21) Sana’ei: “man is he who could recognize himself”; 22) Hafiz: “patience and evasion are two old friends”; 23) Ferdowsi: “art is possessed only by Iranians”; 24) Ferdowsi: “do not postpone today’s tasks to tomorrow”; and, 25) Nezami: “be the child of your qualities”. These expressions and hemistichs respectively convey different themes such as thinking before speaking, magnanimity, paying attention to the outcomes of actions, valuableness of self-recognition, the relatedness of patience and victory, Iranians’ skillfulness in art, avoidance of hesitation, and reliance on one’s self.

The investigations indicated that there is a sort of order and meaning in the inscriptions: 1) there are only two ĀYĀT from the holy Quran above the entry porch in the northeast and southwest of the building, i.e. towards the Qibla; 2)

above the porches, entry porches, northeastern porch, and southwestern porch, the application of verses and ĀYĀT is witnessed and they all emphasize on the value of the knowledge; and 3) in the doorways in the beginning and ending parts of both the eastern and western edges as well as in the transom of every classroom in the northern, western and eastern edges, expression, a hemistich or a verse from a famous Iranian person with educational themes has been inscribed on tiles. It can be understood from what was mentioned above that attention has been paid to Dar Al-Fonūn School's inscriptions to both education and upbringing. As it is known, education includes the setting of the grounds and providing the factors for the actualization and blossoming of human talents in the favored direction. Education is a term referring to the teaching of special subjects and skills to students of schools and universities such as the instruction of math, physics, chemistry, and Arabic; education also points to teaching religious and ethical matters and fostering the students in such a way that they can become great humans. Both of these two matters (education and upbringing) have been well taken into account in the concepts, themes, holy Quran's ĀYĀT, poems, and mottos on the inscriptions installed in Dar Al-Fonūn School.

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