

LANGAR OTA MAUSOLEUM: HISTORY AND MODERN TIMES

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Abstract:

The article analyzes the history of the Hazrati Langar Ota shrine in the medieval period of Central Asia, its creation, and its historical significance from a modern perspective.

Keywords: Port, post station; caravanserai, Mausoleum, place; poorhouse; monastery; grave; tomb; roadside stop; post station; stopping place; tightrope walker's pole, regional library.

Introduction

There are many historical monuments in our country. Madrasas, mausoleums, mosques, khanqahs, and Mausoleums, built in different periods, witnessing tumultuous times, each preserved as a piece of the past, are the silent enigma of our history. In the Kashkadarya region, there are 927 cultural heritage sites, of which 163 are architectural structures, 683 are archaeological monuments, 61 are ancient works of art, and 20 are Mausoleums. One of them is the Langar Ata Mausoleum, located in the village of Langar in the Hissar mountain range, 25-30 kilometers from the village of Kiziltepa in the Kamashi district.

Material and Methods

First, let's clarify the meaning of the term "Langar". The word "Langar" exists in various forms in Greek, Latin, Romance-Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, Iranian, some Indian, Finnish, Arabic, and several Turkic languages. A.Z. Rosenfeld identified its ancient meanings based on historical dictionaries: temple; caravanserai; a place where food is given to the poor; poorhouse; monastery; grave; tomb; roadside stop; post station; stopping place; tightrope walker's pole; a ship's hooked iron.

Its oldest meaning is a temple, a stopping place. Some meanings have been preserved in the Uyghur language: langar – a port, post station, caravanserai

along a major road. In the Tajik language of the X-XIX centuries, the word langar had meanings such as a place where travelers stop; a guesthouse; a monastery. The meaning of temple has not been preserved in any language, only as place names [5:155-156].

The naming of these sites is mainly related to the elevated locations along important caravan routes where people stopped and resided relatively more often.

Usually, places where famous sheikhs and Sufis settled were called langars. It is likely that food was distributed to the common people in the sheikhs' langars, possibly from the income generated by waqf properties [3:710].

Results

Historically, it is known that Amir Temur, with the aim of making Shahrisabz the heart of a great state, began the construction of the "House of Happiness" with thousands of rooms. It was intended to promote various methods of instilling Islamic ideas into the human psyche, along with the development of science and knowledge.

In particular, musicians and performers from different countries of the world were invited to convey love for God through songs and music. It is possible that after the disintegration of the country after Sahibkiran's death, the promoters of the "Ishqiya" tariqa, who were growing up in the "House of Happiness," took refuge in the village of Langar among the mountains. This is because Sheikh Abul Hasan, who is buried in Langar, was a promoter of the "Ishqiya" tariqa. This mausoleum was built by Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq over the tomb where Abul Hasan Ishqi was buried, and the tomb thus remained inside the mausoleum, at a deeper level.

The construction of the mausoleum is associated with the name of Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq, the son of Sheikh Abul Hasan Ishqi. Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq had a high position during the Shaybanids, and even Navruz Ahmad did not oppose his views. According to reports, the sheikh was a qadi in Shahrisabz during this period. When power passed into the hands of Abdullah Khan II, he dismissed the sheikh, who had good relations with his rivals, from his position. He arrived in Langar around 950 AH (1562-63 AD) and continued the construction of the khanqah started by his ancestors [3:710-711].

The inscriptions on the marble stones erected vertically at the head of the graves of the sheikhs buried inside the Langar Ata Mausoleum are a great source for us. The first grave is that of Sheikh Abul Hasan ibn Sheikh Ilyas ibn Sheikh Muhammad ibn Sheikh Khudoikul, whose death is dated to 897 AH, the second grave is that of Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq ibn Sheikh Abul Hasan ibn Sheikh Ilyas, who died in 952 AH, and the third grave belongs to Abul Hussain ibn Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Abul Hasan ibn Sheikh Ilyas ibn Sheikh Muhammad ibn Sheikh Khudaikul, whose death is recorded in 967 AH. The 2-meter high tombstones, artistically crafted and erected in honor of the sheikhs, show the high prestige of the saints buried in this place [1:67].

The book "From the History of Ancient Kesh - Shahrisabz," published under the editorship of Academician A. Sagdullayev, also includes the research of the well-known archaeologist M.E. Masson on the tombstones of Old Langar. He noted that the epitaphs in the cemetery belong to the period from the 15th-16th centuries to the 20th century. M.E. Masson also noticed that in some of the tombstones, the inscriptions were erased and rewritten [4:122].

At the top of the mausoleum, there are four circular standards, which, according to locals, are similar to those found atop the mausoleum of Jalaluddin Rumi in Turkey. These circles correspond to the sharia, ma'rifa, tariqa, and haqiqa (the four aspects of Islamic knowledge and practice) in Islam. It is believed that the four circles were installed because the Sheikh was a knowledgeable scholar in all areas.

The construction of the mausoleum was actively supported by the beks of the Kungrat tribe. According to this, the representatives of the Obokli branch of the Kungrat tribe provided bread and flour, the Barmok branch provided livestock, and the settled tribe brought stones for construction [1:70-75].

On a separate hill, about 400-500 meters north of the mausoleum, another historical building has been preserved. The surface and height of this monument, said to be a mosque, and the mausoleum match each other, which indicates the high level of architecture of that period. Due to the increase in the village population over time, a five-column additional structure was built on the south side of the old mosque.

The mosque consists of 2 khanqahs, 1 ayvan, 4 mihrabs, 19 columns, and 7 doors. The 2 khanqahs are called the big mosque and the small mosque. First, the small mosque was built, and later, due to the increase in worshipers, the big

mosque and ayvan were built. Verses 1-11 of the "Fath" surah are written on the upper part of the inner wall of the large mosque, and it is decorated with various patterns and ornaments. It is written on the top of the column of the large khanqah of the mosque that it was repaired by the master Muhammadiyor in 1362 AH (1905 AD). The height of the mosque is 11 meters, and its length and width are more than 32 meters. The ceiling of the mosque is covered with vassajuft. Its mihrab section is decorated with subtle taste and high skill. The area around the mihrab is filled with Arabic script written in the thuluth style.

Also, a magnificent mosaic created from colorful tiles with white inscriptions on a blue background attracts attention. Usually, such luxurious mihrabs can only be seen in mosques in major cities. In addition, gold leaf is applied to the star-shaped patterns on the walls of the mosque. According to the elders of the village, there were precious stones in the middle of the star-shaped patterns, which were later stolen.

In 1889, Colonel Belyavsky, who conducted military operations in the eastern territories of the Bukhara Emirate, recorded his memories of the historical monuments that stood tall in the village of Langar. The Russian military engineer B. Kastalsky was the first to scientifically assess the Mausoleum and architectural monuments here. While returning from the city of Termez, he entered the village of Langar and got acquainted with the monuments here and photographed them.

These photos were exhibited at the first Turkestan photo exhibition held in Tashkent in 1888 and attracted the attention of the audience. After that, the artist B. Litvinov came here, got acquainted with the historical monuments and ancient sites in the village of Langar, collected his impressions, wrote an article, and published it in the "Turkestanskiye Vedomosti" newspaper in 1910. In addition, in the 1930s, the archaeologist S.K. Kabanov, and in the 1960s, M.E. Masson, stayed here for several days, studied the historical monuments, read the inscriptions, and collected a lot of information about the lives of the Langar sheikhs.

The Langar Ata Mausoleum is also valuable because the original Uthman copy of the Holy Quran, the blessed robe – "Hirqayi Mubarak," and the turban of our Prophet (peace be upon him) have been passed down from generation to generation. This sacred book, written on gazelle skin with a size of 50x32 cm, consists of 225 pages [2:129].

Currently, only thirteen pages of it have been preserved. According to Professor E. Rizvon of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, who conducted research on this book, other pages of this Quran in the Langar mosque were taken to foreign countries for various reasons. With great difficulty, the scientist managed to find the missing pages of the Langar Quran in different countries and took photocopies of them, then put them together and presented them to the village mosque as a gift.

Discussion

There are several assumptions about the history of how the Langar Quran came to our country:

1) The Arabs who came to Afghanistan in the Middle Ages moved to Central Asia for certain reasons and brought this copy of the Quran with them; 2) The Arabs who were moved by Amir Temur from Syria to the mountainous region of Kashkadarya also brought this Quran with them.

In 2004, 12 pages of the Great Langar Quran were re-copied by the skilled calligrapher Habibullah Solih, and now that manuscript copy is kept in the treasury of sources of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan (<https://muslim.uz/> Interesting and unique information about the Langar Quran).

After the decree of our esteemed President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on May 24, 2017, "On measures to further improve the system of preservation, research and promotion of ancient written sources," a number of practical works were carried out in this direction in our country ("Xalq So'zi" newspaper, May 25, 2018).

At the media forum held on December 10, 2018, facsimile copies of the Great Langar Quran based on European technologies were presented within the framework of the "Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan in World Collections" project.

Today, a total of 16 pages of this unique manuscript are available in Uzbekistan, one of which is in the manuscript fund of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, one in the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, two in the Bukhara Regional Library, and 12 pages are kept in the village of Langar.

Based on the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers to develop the tourism potential of the Kashkadarya region, large-scale works are being carried out at the Langar Ata Mausoleum. This place is being restored to its former glory and

continues to fascinate the people of our region and visitors with its beauty and grace.

It can be seen that a great history has been encapsulated in this sacred site where hundreds of saints and great personalities have found rest. Finding these national and spiritual riches of our people is one of the most pressing tasks today.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the history of Langar Ata, one of the famous Mausoleums in our country, has not yet been fully studied. The legends among the local population and the existing historical sources do not fully reveal the history of the Mausoleum. It is beyond doubt that fully illuminating the history of this blessed Mausoleum will serve to further enrich the spirituality of our people.

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