Holy City of Qum: Past and Present

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A provincial capital since June 1996, Qum is a city 140 kilometers to the south of Tehran on the verge of the kavir, the vast desert of central Iran. Centuries before the arrival of Islam in the region, it was a major village among the many hamlets of the area. Several traditions and theories exist concerning the town's origin and name According to one of the more credible of them, its name derives from "kumeh," meaning a group of neighboring dwellings, which was changed to "Kum" before it came to be called "Qum" by the Arab settlers.

According to another theory it derives from "Kamidan," which was the name for a portion of the area, which was later abbreviated as "Kum" before it came to be pronounced as "Qum" by the Arabs who migrated to the region.

These scattered hamlets were inhabited by Arab Muslim' following their conquest of Iran, and, like many other Iranian towns, a number of them settled there. Accounts of the encounters of these Arabs with Iranian natives are cited in the sources including Ta'rikh-i Qum (compiled in 379/989), by Hasan b Muhammad b. Hasan al-Qummi, which is the most important geographical source about the area. A major change in the history of this district was the transformation of its central part into a town during the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. Since that time, Qum is mentioned in many geographical works written in the 4th /10th and the following centuries.

The town's fame in the geographical sources compiled in the 4th /10th century was mainly due to its Shi’i character, which stood in contrast to other cities of the surrounding region which were predominantly Sunni. The Arabs settlers belonged to different tribes, but the dominant among them was the Yemeni tribe of the Ash'aris (descendents of Sa'ib b. Malik al Ash'ari and his cousins), who were formerly residents of Iraq and had migrated to the region in the seventh and eighth decades of the 1st / 7th century due to causes arising from their religious and political differences with the Umayyad rulers. The Ash'aris, who were Shi'i, took control of the town and remained staunchly attached to their Shi’i creed. After the burial in the town in 201/ 816 of Fatimah Ma'sumah, sister of Imam 'Ali b. Musa (A.S.), the Shi’i character of the town became reinforced and more pronounced than ever before.

The Ash'arites, who had an experience of communal living and farming, established many hamlets around Qum, so much so that many of the villages and streams in the region are named after individuals belonging to this family.(1)

From the 4th/10th century onwards Qum was considered to be part of the Iranian province of "the Jibal," which extended to Hamadan in the west, Isfahan in the south, and Rayy and Qazvin in the north. The town's water supply was partly provided through a subterranean system of canals (qanat) and partly by the Qum River, which originates in the mountains of Khwansar and Golpayegan. According to the Ta'rikh Qum, the town's water used to be sweet, but during the last several centuries it had became hard due to mixing with underground salt deposits. Today the hardness of Qum's water is one of the city's major problems. The Qum River, which divides the city into its eastern and western parts, has practically dried up after the construction of the Fifteen Khordad Dam (inaugurated in 1994) during the second decade after the Islamic Revolution. The riverbed serves as a drain channel for occasional floodwaters and, in the part of it that passes through the town, parking slot.

Qum attracted some royal attention during the Buwayhid rule (4th/10th century) due to its Shi'i character. During the Seljuq period (5th_6th/11th _l2th centuries), like other cities of the Jibal, it contributed several men of letters and secretaries in the employment of the regime.(2) The city's Masjid Jami’ is a relic of that period. Throughout this period Qum as a Shi'i town had close relations with Rayy, Kashan, Aweh and Farahan, as a result of which the people of these towns also embraced the Shi'i creed. During the Mongol invasion, the town faced bloodshed and devastation like many other Iranian cities.

Qum remained a minor town during the 8th/15th and 9th/16th centuries, but it continued to attract the attention of the rulers and notables due to the shrine of Fatimah Ma'sumah. During the 8th/15th century the city was controlled by some eminent families, such as the Safis,(3) who served as local chieftains by establishing relations with bigger powers in the region. However, rivalries for the control of the city often exposed it to attacks. (4)

The city received the attention of Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu rulers during the 9th/ 16th century. Uzun Hasan, the Aq Qoyunlu king (857-882/1453-1478), for instance, used it as his winter capital, at times staying there through the spring. The city was known to be the winter capital of the kings of this dynasty. Royal decrees issued by Qara Qoyunlu kings concerning the (office of the Shrine's mutawalli (caretaker) are extant. (5

Qum during the Safawid Period:

Shah Isma'il (907-930/1501-1524) who had inherited from the Qara Qoyunlu predecessors the tradition of traveling to the provinces of the Jibal, especially Isfahan and Qum, for a temporary stay, took greater interest in this city on account of his Shi'i beliefs. The northern hall of Ma'sumah's shrine is a relic of Shah Isma'il's days. It was built in 925/1519, as mentioned in

an existing inscription. Thereafter Qum received greater royal attention. The holy environs of the shrine led it to become a central place for royal and noble mausoleums.

The tombs of five Safawid kings. Shah Safi (d. 1052/1642), Shah 'Abbas II (d. 1077/1666), Shah Sulayman (d. 1105/1693), Shah Sultan Husayn (dethroned and killed by the Afghan invaders in 1135/1722), and Shah Tahmasb II (dethroned in 1144/1731), as well as those of a number of Safawid princes and nobles exist around the tomb of Hazrat Ma'sumah.(6) Although the practice of carrying the dead to be buried at Qum dates back from earlier times, it became a prevalent custom since the Safawid era, a practice which continues until present times.

The frequent journeys of Shah 'Abbas II to Qum for the purpose of ziyarah and his meetings with Fayz Kashani (d. 1091/1680) show the importance of this city during that period. Moreover, the sojourns of Mulla Sadra Shirazi (979-1050/1571-1640) and Qazi Sa'id Qummi at Qum, and the residence there of Mulla Muhammad Tahir Qummi (d. 1098/1686) and Fayyaz Lahiji (1072/1661) reveal its importance as a centre of scholarly pursuits.

Qum during the Qajar Period:

Without doubt the physical and cultural development of Qum in the last two centuries is due to the patronage of the Qajar rulers, in particular that of Fath Ali Shah (r. 1212-1250/1797-1834) and some of his ministers, as well as his sons and successors. At the beginning of his rule, Fath 'Ali Shah had vowed to dedicate a sum of hundred thousand Tumans to the purpose of refurbishing Ma'sumah's shrine.(7) At that time Mirza Qummi (d. 1232/1816), the author of the Qawanin, who enjoyed the Shah's zealous patronage, lived here.

Fath 'Ali Shah visited Qum several times for ziyarah and to meet Mirza Qummi. The present building of the shrine was largely rebuilt during the Qajar era, as is also attested by the numerous existing inscriptions. Qum witnessed a new phase of growth during this period. Besides a series of new subterranean canals for water supply, a number of structures were constructed by Qajar nobles and local notables.

Many members of the Qajar family are buried in the Old Courtyard (Sahn-i 'Atiq) of the shrine. Most prominent among them is the tomb of Fath Ali Shah, which is covered with fine marble and is located in an elegantly built chamber. A number of Qajar princes are also buried there. The tomb of Muhammad Shah Qajar is also in the same courtyard. Among other Qajar figures who have tombs within the shrine are Mahd 'Ulya (Nasiruddin Shah's mother), Fakhr al-Dawlah (his daughter), Mu'tamad al-Dawlah, one of the political figures of the Qajar era, and Mirza Hasan Khan Mustawfi al-Mamalik.(8)

Qum also witnessed a change in its demographic composition during the Qajar era. Collective migrations brought large number of people from the west, who settled inside Qum and in the surrounding area and gradually altered the composition of the city's population, so much so that the original inhabitants of the town became confined to the oldest localities situated between the shrine and the Masjid-i Jami'. Important among the groups that migrated to Qum were the Bigdilis, the Zandiyyeh, the Sadwands, the Gainis, the Kalhurs, the Lashanis, the Kurzehbars, the 'Abd al- Malikis, the Khalajs (9) and the Shad-Qulis.(10) Thanks to the contemporary scholarly interest in recording facts relating to Qum during the Nasirid era, which led to the compilation of such works as Tarikh-i Dar al-Iman-i Qum, one can reconstruct a (?vivid picture of Qum during this period. (11

Qum During the Pahlavi Regime:

The development of the city continued during this period at a gradual pace. The first new streets were laid out in 1928. The importance of Qum as a transit town between Tehran and the southern cities was evident since the latter part of the Qajar era. The railway line connecting Tehran to southern part of Iran, which passes through Qum, was laid in 1937. From 1965 onwards, new roads were built connecting Qum to Tehran in the north and to Kashan, Isfahan and Arak in the south and the west. With the increase in oil revenues since 1975, the development of the city proceeded at an accelerated pace and new official institutions were established.(12)

Part of the city's development work was carried out by the Shrine's mutawalli and the leading ulema. For instance. Grand Ayatullah Shihab al-Din Mar'ashi, one of the leading religious authorities, founded the biggest library in the town in 1353/1974. Before the victory of the Islamic Revolution (1979) there were, besides the ordinary schools, a college affiliated to Tehran University. Other educational institutions in the city consisted of religious seminaries and institutions, which besides religious education and training published several periodicals. The shrine of Hazrat Ma'sumah's did not experience any change during this period, except that a considerable portion of the graveyard towards its north eastern side was turned partly into a pavement and a park, leaving a surviving portion known as the Shaykhan Cemetery.

During the Pahlavi era, there existed three separate active centers of power in Qum. First was the city's governor, who represented the regime.

Second was the shrine's mutawalli (13) who, besides being quite wealthy himself, controlled many endowments and properties, and possessed considerable influence. Third were the leading members of the ulema who represented spiritual and religious leadership and had a

large number of followers among the laity and seminary students.

Like other cities, Qum also entered a new phase during the Pahlavi era. In 1926, in an unprecedented affront to tradition, Reza Shah's wife and daughters visited Qum without observing the hijab, the traditional modest Islamic dress for women. This led to a vehement protest by one of the clergymen named Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Bafqi (d. 1946). A few days later, Reza Shah came to Qum and chastened the protestor. This was the first confrontation of the clergy with the regime, a conflict which continued the following year in the form of the defiance led by Aqa Nur Allah Najafi (d. 1927) against Reza Khan's regime. However, it was suppressed by the regime.

The regime's policies of westernization met with protest by Ayatullah Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Ha'ri (d. 1936). But the regime, oblivious to all resistance, continued such anti-clerical measures as closing the madrasahs, imposing restrictions on the wearing of traditional dress by the clergy and seminary students, forbidding celebration of the traditional mourning ceremonies, and the unveiling of women — measures which were viewed with great resentment by the clergy and the devout.

The town's political significance begins with its entry into the stage of politics in late 1339 H. Sh./1961 and early 1340/1962. Political activism commenced by Ayatullah Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khumayni (b. 1320/1902), whose revolutionary zeal attracted the support of large number of young clergymen, created a new environment of political struggle against the Pahlavi regime. Violent repression continued for four years until the opposition was quelled by the regime by resorting to severe measures. Ayatullah Khumayni was exiled to Turkey and Iraq. However, from that time Qum became the centre of anti-regime protests and activities as the clergy struggled to spread Islamic revolutionary ideas through books, pamphlets, and announcements and by dispatching preachers to rural areas during the months of Muharram and Ramazan. In the following years many of the city's clergymen were arrested and imprisoned. After the attack on seminary students in June 19965 by the Shah's security forces and the closure of the Fayziyyah seminary, the event which triggered the Islamic Revolution occurred in this city on 19th Dey 1356 (January 9, 1978). On this day were ignited the flames of the Revolution which spread later to other Iranian cities, and ultimately led to the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime in February 1979 and its replacement by an Islamic theocratic republic with Qum as its spiritual and intellectual seat

Qum after the Islamic Revolution:

With the emergence of Qum as the centers of religious studies and the seat of religious

leadership after the Islamic Revolution, the city's developmental needs came to receive greater official attention. The city's boundaries were extended with the inflow of increasing number of immigrants. Several new townships, such as Shahr-i Qa'im, Yazdan Shahr, Shahrak-i Imam Khumayni, Safa Shahr, Shahrak-i Imam Hasan and Shahrak-i Quds, were established in the outskirts, adding new localities to the city on all sides.

Moreover, a good number of religious seminaries, academic institutions and libraries were established during the last two decades. The population of the city, which was 96,499 in 1956, had grown to 681,253 in 1991. At the end of 2000 it had increased to 825,627, with about another 40,000 living in the surrounding rural areas. The immigrant population consists of four groups. Firstly there are those who come to Qum for studies and in the course of time become permanent residents.

A large group of immigrants are Iraqis who were expelled from their country during the course of war with Iran. They have established their own bazaar in the Guzar Khan, and many of them reside in Yazdan Shahr. A third group consists of large numbers of Afghan refugees who have taken up residence in Qum during the last twenty-two years. A fourth group consists of rural immigrants, especially the Turkish-speaking villagers from rural areas around Hamadan, Zanjan and East Azarbaijan, who constitute the largest number of settlers. They had established an impoverished locality called Nirugah before the Islamic Revolution, which has expanded and now constitutes a large section of the present city. Most of these settlers are workers and shopkeepers.

Qum as Centre of Religious Studies:

As the first independent centre of the Twelver Shi'is established in Iran, the city was controlled by the followers of this creed since the 2nd/8th century. As followers of the Imams of the Prophet's descent, they recorded and safeguarded the narrations and traditions of the Infallible Imams. As they did not have any center outside Baghdad, they developed Qum into an academy of Shi'i hadith. The names of a large number of Ash'aris belonging to Qum are found in Najashi's Rijal, which is a list of Shi'i authors up to the fourth/tenth century. Also the names of many persons belonging to this city are found among narrators of the traditions of the Imams recorded in the great compendium of Shi'i hadith, Al-Kafi.

However, Qum's fame as an academic centre seems to have disappeared after the 5th/11th century as the centre of Shi'i scholarship in Iran moved to Rayy and other cities of northern Iran, though according to 'Abd al-Jalil Razi there did exist several madrasahs in Qum during the 6th/l2th century.(14) Scholars such as Fayz Kashani (d. 1091/1680) and Mulla

Muhammad Tahir Qummi (d. 1098/1686) lived here during the Safawid era, but there are no significant outstanding figures to be found here during the long period extending from the 5th/11th to the 12th/17th century (except for Qutb al-Din Rawandi [1112-1182] whose grave is in the main courtyard of Ma'sumah's shrine). The reemergence of Qum as a religious academy was due to the special interest in the city by Qajar notables.

One of the most eminent figures in the Shi'i world was Mirza-yi Qummi (d. 1232/1816) who had excellent relations with Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar. Being a religious authority (marja taqlid) and author of important works on law and jurisprudence, he is considered a point of departure in the history of Qum as an academic centre. Nevertheless, Qum continued to remain mainly a pilgrimage spot rather than an academic centre throughout the Qajarid era.

A new era in the life of the city as an academic centre begins with the arrival of Ayatullah Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Ha'iri (1276-1355/1859-1936), who migrated to Qum in 1340/1921. During a period when the Qajar regime was in a state of imminent fall and the Pahlavi regime was gradually emerging, the academic centre at Qum was established under the leadership of this scholar and jurist. Before that, and afterwards as well, Najaf had remained the most important academy for the training of Shi'i scholars and jurists since the 5th/11th century.

Ayatullah Ha'iri had studied at the academic centers of the holy cities of Iraq. In 1332/1913-14 he had returned from Iraq to reside and work at Sultanabad, near the city of Arak, as a religious guide and teacher of religious sciences. However, considering the favorable position of Qum as a pilgrimage centre, like Najaf, he preferred it as a place suitable for the establishment of a religious academy. In the Rajab of 1340 (March 21 1922, coincident with the Iranian New Year) he came to Qum on the invitation of some scholars of the town and established the hawzah 'ilmiyyah. During the last fifteen years of his life in Qum he also urged several other scholars of eminence to settle in the city.

He extended the Fayziyyah Madrasah, paid the students a humble monthly stipend, and reduced the anti-ulama pressure of Reza Khan Pahlavi's regime by urging the religious students to stand aloof from politics. The fame of the Fayziyyah, an old madrasah built in the 6th /12 th century (15) and extended and renovated during the Safawid (16) and the Qajarid (17) periods, dates from the time of Ayatullah Ha'iri who renovated the building, added another story to the structure, and established a library.

There was a temporary period of setback in the importance of Qum as a religious academy after the death of Ha'iri (17th Dhu al-Qa'dah 1355/Bahman 10, 1315/13 th January 1937) until the arrival of Ayatullah Burujerdi (1944) and his recognition as the major religious authority of the Shi'i world following the death of Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Hasan Isfahani

(1946) at Najaf. However, many youths had taken up the pursuit of religious studies following the abdication of Reza in Shahrivar 1320 (August-September 1941) and the resulting alleviation in the regime's anti-religious policies. From the arrival of Ayatullah Burujerdi from Burujerd onwards, the hawzah 'ilmiyyah began its rapid growth.

Some of Ha'iri's pupils were now among senior teachers of the hawzah, among them Ayatullah Ruhullah al-Musavi al-Khumayni, the future leader of the Islamic Revolution. Gradually, from the time of Ayatullah Ha'iri onwards a number of the 'ulama at Najaf began shifting to Qum and participated in the development of the hawzah.'" Besides paying attention to the upkeep of many madrasahs, Burujerdi built a big mosque adjacent to the Shrine known as Masjidi A'zam (begun in 1374/1954), which until today serves as a major teaching space for the highest level of study (dars-i kharij) by the most eminent of teachers. Two religious periodicals were also published during this period.

During Burujerdi's time, with a suspension of the repressive policies of the past, the ulema had gradually begun to step into politics. Also as a direct result of the propagation of anti-religious ideas by the Pahlavi court and the communist parties the political and social position of the ulema rose among the devout, who were alarmed by the onslaught of anti-religious trends and considered the ulema as defenders of the country's cultural and religious tradition and identity.

Ayatullah Burujerdi died in Farvardin 1340/February-March 1961.

After him several scholars rose to the position of marja'iyyah, among them Ayatullah Khumayni. On entering politics, he confronted the Pahlavi regime, which exiled him in 1343/1964 first to Turkey and then to Iraq, where he settled at Najaf. After the experience of the Constitutional Movement, the second entry of the clergy into the field of politics had begun from the times of Burujerdi.

The years 1340-43/1961-64 marked a turbulent period of protests in the course of which the ulema opposed the Shah's agricultural reforms, the six-point program of the White Revolution, the Capitulation, and the constitutional amendments. The bloodiest of these confrontations, which occurred not only in Qum but also in Tehran and many other cities, was that of 15 Khordad (June 5, 1964). It followed popular outrage and protest against the arrest and imprisonment of the revolutionary leader.

After the exile of Ayatullah Khumayni in 1343/1964, religious leadership was practically carried out by three ayatullahs based in Qum: Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Shari'atmadari (d. 24 Rajab 1406 H./15 Farvardin 1365 H. Sh./April 1986), Sayyid Muhammad Reza Golpayegani (d. 24 Jamadi al-Thani 1414 H. /18 Azar 1372/December 1993) and Sayyid Shihab al-Din Mar'ashi (d. 5 Sharivar 1369/August 1990). Each of them established several institutions, such as

seminaries, libraries and academic centers for training preachers and missionaries. At the end of Reza Khan's reign, the number of religious students in Qum was about 500.(19) This number was more than 6000 in the year 1975, and in 1991 it was above 23,000. Presently Iranian and non-Iranian students in Qum together make up more than 35 thousand. In the years before the Revolution some madrasahs were established in Qum on modern lines, the most famous of them being Madrasah Haqqani, many of whose graduates later joined the judiciary. A number of other schools, more of a traditional kind, were established under the aegis of Ayatullah Golpayegani.

New schools were established after the Revolution with large numbers of students joining the hawzah for religious studies. Gradually a special regulatory body, called Shura-yi Mudiriyyat-i Hawzah Ilmiyyeh-yi Qum, was created to coordinate the functioning of these schools. In recent years, a high council has been established to formulate curricula and programs for schools of religious studies and to regulate the functioning of the numerous schools of Qum and other cities. After going through a curriculum that takes eight to ten years to complete, the graduates of these schools take up various kinds of available careers.

A number of them remain in the hawzah for advanced studies and gradually become teachers. In the course of time some of the senior teachers of outstanding ability and erudition among them become religious authorities (marjah) in rather advanced years of life. Selection for this office depends on learning, moral integrity, personal charisma, and the ability to win the confidence of the general public. In recent years, a well-known clerical-political body of the hawzah put out a list of candidates from among the scholars of Qum eligible for the marja'iyyat so that the people may select one of them for taqlid (following a jurist in the matters of Shan 'ah). Eminent scholars from Najaf also continue to be candidates for the marja 'iyyat.

Since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution a large number of Muslim youths from abroad have come to Qum for traditional Islamic studies. Earlier they were enrolled in Madrasah Hujjatiyyah, a major madrasah in the city centre. In the course of time the academic training of foreign students was centralized with the establishment in 1993 of a major seminary called Madrasah Imam Khumayni. These students come from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, African countries and other parts of the world. Some of them from Arab countries, such as Lebanon, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, have independent seminaries of their own. The Jami al- Zahra' is a large seminary devoted to religious training of female students from Iran and abroad.

Besides the traditional madrasahs, there is also a state-run university in Qum which grew out of the Madrasah-yi "Aali-yi Qaza'i, a law college that had been established for training seminary graduates as judges for the judiciary. Later on it grew into the Qum University which

trains students in various social and human sciences. Among other academic institutions which offer degree courses in humanities and social sciences to graduates from the seminaries are the Shaykh Mufid University, Baqir al-Ulum Institute, Martyr Mahallati Academy (affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps), and the Radio and Television Academy. The Qum branch of the Islamic Free University (Danishgah-i Azad-i Islami), the Fatimiyyeh University, a women's university of medical sciences, and a college affiliated to Tehran University also train a large number of students.

After Tehran, Qum has the largest number of bookstores and publishers among Iranian cities. There are also several research institutes, established in recent years, which carry out academic research in various fields of Islamic and social studies.(20) Many of these institutions publish academic journals on specialized subjects. There are more than thirty (journals devoted to research on religious, social, cultural and political subjects.(21

Qum as a Pilgrimage Centre:

The importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot is due in the first place to the shrine of Fatimah Ma'sumah, daughter of the Seventh Imam, Musa b. Ja'far (A.S.). Second in importance from the viewpoint of pilgrimage are the graves of several Alawid personages who lie buried within and around Qum. Thirdly it is due to the Jamkaran Mosque which is situated at distance of 5 kilometers from the city. These shrines and holy places in conjunction with numerous traditions related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) concerning the meritorious position of Qum as a Shi'i centre and the importance of the ziyarah of the grave of Fatimah Ma'sumah have made Qum the second holy city of Iran after Mashhad. Limited access to the holy shrines of Iraq and the long distance of Mashhad from central Iran have contributed to the importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot since the Safawid period.

In the year 201/816 Fatimah Ma'sumah traveled to Iran from Madinah for the purpose of visiting her brother Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Reza (A.S.) who was at Marv (presently in the Republic of Turkmenistan), the Abbasid capital at the time. During the course of her journey she fell ill at Saveh. She moved to Qum and died seventeen days after her arrival. She was buried in the house of her host, named Musa b. Khazraj, one of the elders of the Ash'aris. A cupola was erected over her tomb. Later on Zaynab, a daughter of Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Jawad (A.S.), who came to Qum after the year 256/870, had a dome built upon her grave which was replaced in 350/961 with a new structure.

In the course of time a large number of notable sayyids of Qum were buried near her tomb. According to 'Abd al-Jalil Razi, Abu al-Fazl Iraqi, one of the outstanding Seljuqid viziers of

Tughril Beg's times built a big structure over Ma'sumah's tomb.(22) He also reports that a large number of people visited her shrine for the purpose of ziyarah during this century. Repairs of the shrine's building continued to be carried on during the following centuries up to the rise of the Safavids.(23) The importance of Qum as a pilgrimage spot increased from the Safawid era with the acceptance of the school of Ahl alBayt by the majority of the people of central Iran to Shi'ism. The number of pilgrims to the city increased steadily during the rule of the Qajars and the Pahlavis. At present the importance of Qum as a shrine city is next only to Mashhad.

The Old Courtyard (Sahn-i 'Atiq), which is situated between the shrine and Fayziyyah Madrasah, was built by Shah Isma'il and his son Shah Tahmasb. Later it was renovated during the Qajar period. The spacious new courtyard towards the east of the shrine, known as Atabaki Courtyard, was built by Mirza 'Ali Asghar Khan Atabak. Conspicuous among the works of Fath Ali Shah was construction of a new gilded dome over the tomb. The Burujerdi Mosque (or Masjid-i A'zam), which stands on the western side of the shrine, has been recently connected to the shrine and the adjoining mosque by removing partition walls. Presently the shrine complex and the related structures cover an area of 13,527 sq. meters.

During the last decades many scholars of eminence have been buried within the shrine, thus increasing its attraction as a pilgrimage spot. Among these personalities, many of whom were figures of scholarly and political eminence who died after the Islamic Revolution, are Ayatullah Sayyid Asadullah Madani, 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i and Murtaza Mutahhari. Besides Hazrat Ma'sumah's shrine there are many other shrines of imamzadahs (sons or descendants of the Imams) buried in the city, which are visited by pilgrims, especially the Shi'is of Pakistan, India and Persian Gulf countries. In addition there is the Jamkaran Mosque on the borders of the city which gives Qum a special attraction as a pilgrimage spot.

As a holy city, Qum has attracted a large number of immigrants. Desirous of taking up residence in a religious and holy environment, they have made it their permanent home. The town has many hotels and travelers' lodgings for visitors and pilgrims.

Since the last five years a new plan is in execution for developing the area around the shrine. Demolition of houses and shops in this area around the shrine is in process. There is also a plan for rebuilding the shrine's dome, said to require 200 kilograms of 24 carat gold. The shrine complex, the Astaneh, which controls a large part of the city's land as endowments, is a conglomerate including a research institute, a library with a large number of manuscripts, a museum and a clinic. It puts out a monthly journal, the Za'ir, and a newsletter called Payam-i Astaneh. After the Revolution, a large madrasah, the Ma'sumiyyah, was built by the Astaneh and handed over to the regulating authorities of the hawzah to be managed.

The link between the holy shrines of Iran and Iraq and the tradition of mourning is an old one. During the days of mourning innumerable bands of mourners converge on the shrine from all over the city. During the course of centuries the mourning traditions and ceremonies of Qum have traveled to other parts of the country due to its character as a Shi'i centre and pilgrimage site that attracted visitors from all over the country. The number of takiyeh and husayniyeh in (the city built for observance of mourning ceremonies is greater than any other city of Iran.(24

The Jamkaran Mosque:

The mosque at the nearby village of Jamkaran (5 kilometers from the city) is one of the main sites for ziyarah. It is referred to in several places in the Ta'rikh-i Qum" as a village that was considered important even before the arrival of the Asharis in the region. It also records that the tribe of Bani Asad settled at Jamkaran.(26) This source cites numerous traditions concerning the origins of this village. According to one of them the village was founded by Dawud b. Sulayman. These traditions underscore the holy character of this place from ancient days.

According to a tradition, the mosque was built at the orders of the Twelfth Imam (A.S.), who directed one of the Shi'i residents of Jamkaran to build a mosque on his land. On this basis, the mosque is generally regarded as possessing a special sanctity and is called "the Holy Jamkaran Mosque." An inscription, oldest on the site, is dated 1153/1740 and has verses engraved on it. It mentions one Aqa 'Ali Akbar Jamkarani as being the founder.(27)

A special feature of the Jamkaran Mosque is that thousands of visitors from Qum and other cities come here on Tuesday and Thursday nights to offer a specially prescribed prayer. It is a popular belief that anyone who visits the mosque for forty consecutive Tuesday nights and performs the prescribed prayer in the mosque will succeed in meeting the Twelfth Imam in person. More than an estimated ten million people visit the Jamkaran Mosque annually. The mosque and its precincts have been vastly extended during the last two decades following the Islamic Revolution. The mosque and the huge open spaces surrounding it are packed with several thousand pilgrims on Tuesday and Thursday nights. These visitors give Qum a look .quite unlike the other days of the week

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Notes:

1. See Hasan b. Muhammad al-Qummi, Ta'rikh-i Qum, the index of places.
2. 'Ali Asghar Faqihi, Ta'rikh-i Madhhabi-yi Qum, pp. 131-132.
3. See Mudarrisi, Qum-nameh, pp. 9-37.
4. Concerning the condition of Qum during the 8th/ and 9th/ centuries see Mudarrisi, Qum dar Qarn-i Nohum Hijri (Qum during the 9th century)
5. Turbat-i Pakan, vol. I, pp. 193 ff.
6. For the inscriptions on these tombs see Sutudeh, Kitabehha-yi Haram-i Hazrat-i Ma'sumah, pp. 33-34.
7. Turbat-i Pakan, vol. I, p. 27.
8. See Sutudeh, Kitabeha, pp. 49-51 for the grave inscriptions, and see Ahmad Shubayri Zanjani, "Safarnameh-yi Qum," in Mirath-i Islamiyi Iran, No. 9, pp. 596-600.
9. See E12 concerning them.

10. See Mudarrisi, Qum-nameh, 79-84.

11, See John Girni, "Ta'rikh-negari-yi Qum dar Doreh-yi Nasiri," in Ganjineh-yi Shahab, vol. 2, pp. 65-94.

12. See Qasimi Nezhad, Rahnama-yi Qum, 1354 H. Sh. For further information concerning the city's development and the arrival of modern institutions, see Ibn al-Reza, Qum az Nazar-i Ijtima'i Iqtisadi.

13. During the years following the Constitutional Movement, the office of the Shrine's mutawalli was held by Muhammad Baqir Tawliyat, who was a friend of Shaykh Fazlullah Nuri. He had two sons, Salar (after whom is named the locality called Salariyeh) and Abu al-Fazl. The latter held this office for years until he was dismissed for supporting Dr. Musaddiq. Though he was reinstated for a short period, but was dismissed again for good and the office passed on to Naft, a brother of Dr. Iqbal, and then to Mehran who was mayor of Tehran for some time. Tawliyat possessed enormous wealth with which he later gradually created endowments in cooperation with a number of clergymen following the activism of the clergy. In recent years the regulation of these endowments was brought under a foundation, the Bunyad-i Tahir, which is apparently administered by the Imam Sadiq (A.S.) University.

14. Naqz, pp. 195-196.

15. Turbat-I Pakan,vol, p. 132.

16. By Tahmasb I in 934/1527.

17. By Fath 'Ali Shah in the years 1213/1798 and 1314/.

18. See Athar al-Hujjah, pp. 76-86.

19. See Athar al-Hujjah, vol. 2, p. 1 19.

20. See Kitab-i Zard, Bashir 79, Qum: Markaz-i Mudiriyyat-I Hawzah-yi Ilmiyyeh-yi Qum, 1379 H. Sh.

21. See Baba Miri, Rahnama-yi Matbu'at-i Qum 1302-1379 H. Sh.

22. See Naqz, p. 219.

23. Turbat-i Pakan, vol. I, pp. 20-21.

24. See Faqihi, Ta'rikh-i Takaya wa 'Azadari-yi Qum, and Mahdi 'Abbasi, Ta'rikh-i Madhhabi-yi Qum, which give an account of the city's mourning ceremonies and traditions.

25. Ta'rikh-i Qum, pp. 34-35.

26. Ibid., p. 38.

27. Concerning the Jamkaran Mosque and the popular beliefs about the place and traditional customs and rites associated with it, see Sayyid Ja'far Mir 'Azimi, Masjid-i Muqaddas-i .Jamkaran