



## Author's Note

At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a fearless man with a limp named Timur led his Mongol army to conquer lands from Iraq to India. He was called Tamerlane which means 'Timur, the Lame'. His descendants are known as the Timurid dynasty. The Timurids adopted and refined the culture of Persia and its rulers were known for their lavish patronage of the arts. The greatest of these patrons was Goharshad.

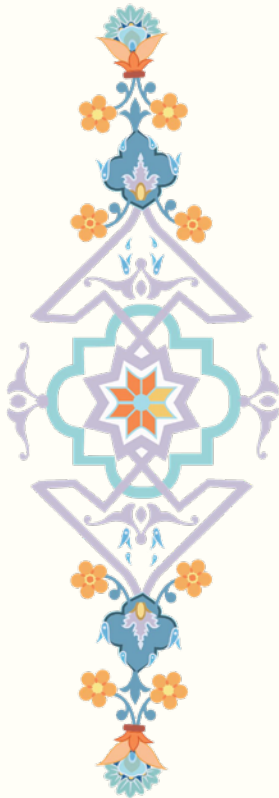
Queen Goharshad ruled with her husband Emperor Shah Rukh over the Timurid Empire for fifty years. She enthusiastically supported the arts and during her reign poetry, music, painting, calligraphy, and architecture flourished as never before.



A 15<sup>th</sup>-century historian, Dawlat Shah, said this of Queen Goharshad's reign—"From the time of Adam until this day, no age, period, cycle, or moment can be indicated in which people enjoyed such peace and tranquility."

Years ago, I visited Herat in western Afghanistan and when I saw the vast, crumbling ruins of Queen Goharshad's college, I was reminded there had once been an Afghanistan far removed from the images shown in the news today. I could envision Herat as 'The Florence of Asia' as it was known in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and I remembered that through one woman's passion, Afghanistan was once a haven of learning and surpassing beauty.

## Guide for Parents and Educators



**Brave with Beauty: A Story of Afghanistan** is historical fiction, but the narrative is constructed using documented facts about the Timurid Era and Queen Goharshad's architectural legacy—examples of which still stand in Mashhad in Iran and Herat in Afghanistan.

The illustrations and book layout pay homage to illuminated manuscripts, an art that reached a high point of refinement under the Timurids.

### Selected References and Further Reading:

#### **Goharshad's achievements and legacy:**

**Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety**, edited by Gavin R. G. Hambly, St. Martin's Press, 1998

**Women in Iran from the Rise of Islam to 1800**, edited by Guity Nashat and Lois Beck, University of Illinois Press, 2003

## The Mosque of the Old Woman in Mashhad:

**A History of Persia**, Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, Volume 2, Macmillan and Co., 1921

## Art of the Timurids:

**Pearls on a String: Artists, Patrons, and Poets at the Great Islamic Courts**, edited by Amy S. Landau, University of Washington Press, 2015

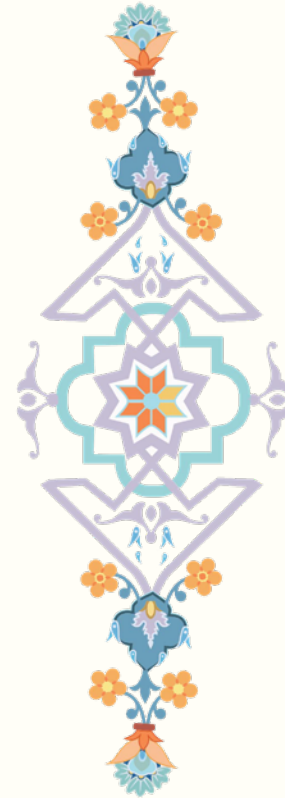
**Paradise as a Garden: In Persian and Mughal India**, Elizabeth B. Moynihan, George Braziller, 1979

**Arts & Crafts of the Islamic Lands: Principles Materials Practice**, Khaled Azzam, Thames & Hudson, 2013

## History of the Timurids and Afghanistan:

**The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 6: The Timurid and Safavid Periods**, edited by Peter Jackson, Cambridge University Press, 1986

**Afghanistan: A Cultural History**, St. John Simpson, Interlink Books, 2012



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