

# Analyzing and investigating the meaning of Silence and Solitude in Traditional Iranian Houses and comparing it with Contemporary Iranian Housing

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## Abstract

One of the most important psychological characteristics of any house is the concept of solitude, which plays a fundamental role in providing the mental comfort of family members and ultimately the comfort of the neighborhood and community. Solitude is one of the most important features of a desirable home and one of the basic needs of people in a residential space, and it means a process in which humans can achieve introspection and adjust their communication range with others. Due to the fact that humans need spaces with individual privacy and collective privacy, therefore, it is necessary to provide a number of spaces for individual privacy and make people relax, and a number of spaces also provide collective privacy for communication and interaction with other family members. If individual privacy and collective privacy are not paid attention to at the same time, human needs will not be fully met and the home space will become an ineffective environment. Therefore, it is essential to know and examine how to achieve the spectrum of solitude in successful examples and to use them to create a balance between individual and collective solitude. The need for family and shelter is one of the most basic and fundamental human needs that plays an important role in providing peace and security. This need is generally examined in two psychological and physical dimensions, which often pay a lot of attention to the quantitative and physical dimension (dimensions, access, safety and strength, equipment and facilities, etc.) designers and architects from addressing the dimension It stops you mentally and physically. One of the most important psychological characteristics of any house is the concept of solitude, which plays a fundamental role in providing the mental comfort of family members and ultimately the comfort of the neighborhood and community. This concept has been well taken into consideration in the traditional houses of Iran and traditional architects have tried to meet this need by using various measures, contrary to what has happened in today's Iranian architecture, which is ignoring privacy, privacy and visual security in buildings. . In recent years, due to the increasing growth of the world's population and, as a result, more contacts and tensions between people, the need to address the concept of solitude seems more necessary. Undoubtedly, paying attention to traditional architectural patterns and preserving its values in contemporary architecture can have a significant impact on improving the quality of modern houses and provide users' satisfaction.

**Keywords:** The concept of solitude, traditional houses, contemporary houses, psychological concept

## Introduction

The house is the first place that humans built to protect and secure themselves. With the passage of time, the concept of home has become wider and human expectations from his place of residence have increased. The house, which at the beginning of human life was a shelter against heat, cold, predatory animals, etc., is now a place that, in addition to providing the physical dimension of human needs, needs of the spiritual dimension must be met. Consider him too. Home is a place for comfort and peace of mind.

Providing the desired solitude at home is one of the most important features that will have a very positive effect on the psyche of people, and as much as observing it will provide peace of mind for people in their place of residence, not paying attention to it will have destructive effects on mental health. They will leave. Observance of privacy in the space leads to an increase in the sense of security, which is one of the basic human needs based on Maslow's pyramid. Thus, the proper design of the space and living environment is important to achieve the desired solitude depending on the social, cultural and even political conditions, and it is necessary to know the meaning and concept of solitude and to examine its impact in shaping the space in which we live. ; that the mentioned concept exists in the principles of architectural design of contemporary housing spatial areas, but they are not paid much attention by designers and architects.

As a safe and relaxing shelter, the house is one of the most basic issues that man has always faced and he is looking for a logical and appropriate solution to provide it. Humans have used and tested different factors, concepts and elements in different times and places to achieve this goal. One of the concepts that have been examined in the books and studies of environmental psychology and related to artificial environments is the concept of "solitude". Compared to the physical and material concepts related to housing, the mentioned concept has not received much attention from architects and designers.

Solitude means the human need to have the necessary and sufficient control and supervision over his relationships and communications with others, and if this human need is not satisfied. A person feels tension and conflict, so people use special tools and behaviors to achieve optimal solitude depending on their socio-cultural conditions and even their age, one of the most important of these tools is designing the space and living environment of people. People always try to have an optimal level of privacy in carrying out activities, and one of the reasons for people's dissatisfaction with the built environment. Failure to provide an optimal level of privacy. As a result, it becomes necessary to know the meaning and concept of solitude and examine its impact in shaping the space in which we live. This research aims to investigate the concept of solitude and its control mechanisms and its impact on the formation of architectural spaces and to search for its reflection in the past and present of Iranian house architecture (Hosseini SF, Soltani, 2018)

## The literal meaning of solitude

Khulut is an Arabic word that means being alone and gathering secretly with someone. Its verb is to empty and it means to be isolated, to empty oneself from others and to be freed from the surrounding environment. Solitude also means to be open and separated and also to be clear and obvious. which has an opposite meaning to the verb to empty.

## The concept of home

House is a vast and complex concept with different dimensions and components that cannot be given a comprehensive and complete definition for it in different cultures and societies. In some cultures, there are basically no words related to building and house, and a single word implies several concepts. For example, sometimes the space that we call a room in the city is called a house by the villagers; Because their house is basically limited to one room or two rooms similar to each other. Zargar (2008) Different architects also have a definition of a house, examples of which are mentioned in the table below.

**Table 1. Several architects' definitions of the house**

Definition of home	the architect
Home is a place where its inhabitants do not feel uncomfortable. Inside the house is a place where women and children should feel tired.	Pyrenees
Among the spaces around the house, it is the most immediate space related to a person, it affects him on a daily basis and it is the first space where a person experiences the sense of spatial belonging. The set of five senses constantly travels all over it and gets used to it in a short period of time. Home is the only place where the first direct experiences with space take place in isolation and togetherness. It becomes possible to be alone with yourself, your	Tado Endo
A house is a cover that, in accordance with some conditions, establishes an intimate relationship between the external environment and human biological phenomena. In the	Le Corbusier
Home is the center of the world for its residents	Charles Moore
The house is primarily an institution and is a structure for complex work for cultural issues influenced by culture. Even from the beginning, the concept of home did not mean a purely functional space, the positive aspect of creating a favorable environment for the family as a social environment refers to the shelter of the home, but what is important. He considers shelter as the duty of the house, which is a social institution. Since the first day, man created the house because of his belief in rituals and cultural issues.	Rapaport

## Characteristics of suitable house

Building and architecture, like all things invented by humans. Under the influence of pressures, there are many different and variable and often conflicting forces and factors that completely change the regular schemas and patterns, classifications and hierarchies that we want to create. and the weather, the shape of the slope of the land for favorable or unfavorable sunlight, for the exercise of beneficial and harmful winds, existing materials, etc.) the cultural and social conditions of the place of construction of structures and facilities, accesses and neighborhoods, etc. are among the things that They should be taken into account when building a house. Paying attention to the building from the physical aspect plays a fundamental role in ensuring the physical health and well-being of the residents, and even a living space that provides security, stability and structural strength, optimal natural or

artificial lighting, efficient heating and cooling facilities, sufficient vertical and horizontal access, resistant and durable materials and Finally, it should have a beautiful and eye-catching form, appearance and volume. It also has a great impact on the mental peace of users. But providing the mental comfort of the users and paying attention to the concepts raised in the field of environmental psychology, such as the boundaries and territories of people's behavior and the cultural and traditional patterns governing different societies, etc., along with the material and physical aspects, play an important role in the design of housing and creation. It has a comfortable and desirable living space. Living in a modern house equipped with all kinds of advanced policies and systems without considering the mental and psychological systems of the users can never give them the feeling of living in a safe and calm shelter (Valibeigi et al., 2022)

### The meaning of solitude

The concept of solitude has been used and studied in several fields of human sciences, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, law, and architecture. "Silence is the process of monitoring the border of the other self. "Privacy is the ability of individuals or groups to control visual, auditory and dynamic interaction with others. Ems is defined by Port Helot as the ability to control social interaction, the right to choose and the possibility of personal social interaction

Therefore, solitude is important in terms of the relationship between the individual and the group and the rest of society. The individual as well as the group sometimes needs to be with others and sometimes needs to be apart from others

**Table 2. Definitions of the concept of solitude from the perspective of the theorists of al-Tamman, 2002**

Definitions of the concept of solitude	theorists
Something other than withdrawal from the crowd and the desire for isolation	Swartz
The amount of information and the distance between people	Simmel, 1950
The value of being alone and relief from the pressure of the presence of others	Chapin, 1951
A person that others should be separate and away from what is important to her, and at the same time acknowledging that others also have a right to that thing....	Baines, 1964
The result of a person's desire to hide his past and present experiences and his goals for the future.....the desire to be a mystery to others with a state that is more disabled. The desire to control the opinions and beliefs of others about oneself.	Zwar, 1966
Access and freedom to choose and determine the purposes necessary to monitor what information we transmit about ourselves.	Eatlon, Proshansky Rivlin, 1970
....the ability to monitor the interaction, having the right to choose and the necessary arrangements and mechanisms to prevent unwanted interaction and achieve the	Ra Ba Port, 1972
A person's distance and closeness to others and freedom of choice regarding relationships with others	Altman, 2001

Contrary to expectations, research shows that extroverts need more solitude than introverts. In addition to personality traits, the difference in the need for solitude is partly due to the attitude of social groups and the role that people play in their society and their socio-economic base. It will return. People's attitude towards solitude is a part of their socialization process and it is a value that can be learned; When people grow older, they need more solitude and use more solitude signs. In fact, growing children maintain less physical distance when talking with children of their own age than older children. Providing optimal privacy for the residents of each house and neighbors in social relations between Fimabin shows the increase of social interactions in the space. Providing proper definition and transparency of private land territories from semi-private and public in Iranian housing and communication and neighborhood has been increasing social interactions. A number of definitions of the concept of solitude from some theorists are listed in Table No. 2.

According to Fergas, solitude is a rather complex concept. This word is used in at least four different meanings. Freedom to choose isolation, freedom to have intimacy without disturbance between oneself and chosen people, freedom to remain anonymous among others, and freedom to be protected through embarrassing information about oneself.

**Table 3. Four types of solitude and destinations according to Westin**

Being free from being seen by others	Isolation	All types of solitude according to Westin
socializing with another person and being free from the outside environment	Kinship	
Being unknown in the crowd	Anonymity	
Using psychological barriers to control unknown disturbances	tolerance	
Provides individual independence.		Destinations provided by solitude according to Westin
Reduces excitement.		
It helps in self-evaluation		
Limits and protects communication.		

**Table 4. Solitude and its functions from Westin and Altman's point of view**

Introspection and individual identity	self assessment	Emotional drain	Individual independence	Different functions of privacy from Westin's
	Introspection and individual identity	Monitoring the interaction of	A person's ability to determine limits and	Different functions of privacy from Westin's

**Table 5. Different aspects of solitude from Al-Tamman's point of view**

Different aspects of solitude from Al-Tamman's point of view	Process between person to person, person to group, group to person and group to group	The process of drawing boundaries between people and determining the level of relationship with others	The dialectical process that leads to the outcome of opposing forces.
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## Physical solitude and spiritual solitude

Physical solitude is when a person goes to a corner and places himself in physical solitude in order to reach peace and get away from worldly constraints. Because what normal people see and interact with becomes their imagination, and for this reason, they need physical solitude to empty their senses of the outside world and disconnect from the outside world. But spiritual solitude is in the power of the soul, which is more sublime and less affected by the environment. In this state, a human being is able to be in solitude with his inner right while interacting with a group and does not need physical solitude (Aliabadi, 2004 p. (45)). . A person who is on the path of evolution and at the beginning of the journey and mysticism. And he still cannot achieve the ability to control his social connections.

## Quiet functions

The functions of privacy are:

The interpersonal functions of this work mostly serve to provide the basic goal of solitude, which is individual identity. Personal identity relies to some extent on the ability of a person to determine and define the limits and boundaries around him, and the ability or failure to monitor the border between himself and others is one of the important factors in achieving personal identity.

The individual's interaction with others. This category has a significant and important role in determining individual strategies and plans for relationship with others, as well as evaluating the individual in relation to others. One of the examples of a person's interaction with others is manifested in the professional relationships of people. Higher authorities often have the right to invade the privacy of others, but the reverse is not true. Solitude mechanisms not only help a person to monitor his interactions with others, but also to develop relationships with others and plan plans and plans in relation to others.

The individual identity of this work has a deep root in the functioning of the individual and has at least two aspects: introspection and individual identity introspection requires an opportunity for individuals or groups to look at themselves and describe and evaluate themselves Non-attendance is not done.

Introspection is a step towards self-worth and individual identity. Individual identity consists of the psychological and emotional understanding of an individual or a group of oneself, as well as understanding which aspects of the material world are part of oneself and which are part of others. Individual identity, understanding is a person From abilities, limitations, weaknesses, feelings, emotions and self-beliefs, this understanding helps a person to evaluate himself whether it is useful for himself and others or not (Altman, 2002, pp. 53-60).

## Solitude in traditional Iranian houses

As mentioned, the need for solitude has a lot to do with culture. The design of neighborhoods, buildings and rooms is done based on human behavior and as a result there are significant differences in different cultures. Port believes that there are fundamental



cultural differences in people's view of solitude. These differences are manifested in the organization of the internal and external spaces of the house.

The introversion and pull of Iranian architects towards courtyards, padias, pit gardens, vestibules, and kolahferangi, which surround the shebastans and create charming and intimate environments, has long been a part of Iran's architectural logic.

Also, under the influence of Islamic culture and religion, ideas and laws entered the life and culture of Iran and overshadowed various aspects of life, including architecture. Solitude is one of the concepts and elements that are very effective in the design and organization of architecture and urban planning, and Muslim architects have used special solutions to meet and provide this need.

The spatial hierarchy of moving step by step from the alley or street to the entrance space of the house and then private spaces, as well as the internal and external system, has been one of the necessary measures to provide optimal privacy. Also, the organization of houses in an introverted way, in addition to the influence of climatic and security factors, has been largely influenced by cultural, religious and social factors.

The separation of internal areas from external areas (the public area is one of the most obvious manifestations of the aforementioned factors in internal architecture. In this type of architecture, the internal area is for a specific social, cultural, religious function (such as mosques, mosques, schools, etc.) and with the area inside residential units. As a private space for family life, it is physically and perceptibly separated from the public space outside, and the connection between the two areas outside and inside is established by joint elements or transitions. As a public arena, it usually enters a dead-end alley that has the role of a shared space with a semi-private arena, and then enters the relatively large and bright central courtyard through the vestibule entrance and a semi-dark corridor with a small human scale.

The sequence of the mentioned space with its special type creates a special perceptual quality. The feeling and perception of different arenas is considered a means for a specific explanation of space design and creating a hierarchy in entering and connecting arenas.

Rayaport considers the home province to be important in creating and observing the norms of solitude and the realm of wealth. The point where the residents of the house react to the arrival of strangers. It is different in different cultures that in traditional houses of Islamic countries this separation is done at the entrance of the house. In addition, in Islamic culture, the solitude required by women also has special conditions. In this architecture, not everyone is allowed to enter the privacy of the family.


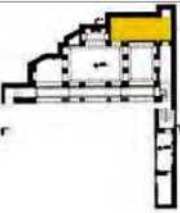



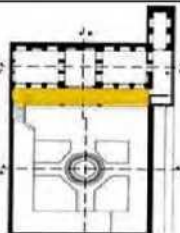



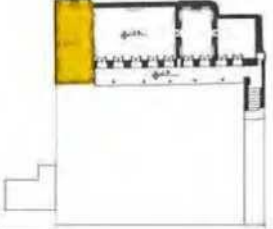

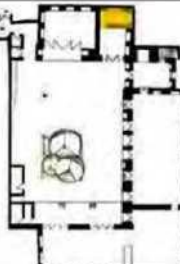
### **The hierarchy of the entrance to the house was as follows**

Most of the houses, especially the luxurious ones, have front doors. The side platforms in front of the door were called pakhore and were for those who had work with the owner of the house but did not have to enter the house, and it was also a hangout for the owner or the boy of the house.

In our traditional houses, even for knocking on the door, different tools were used so that it would be possible for the landlord to identify the gender of the person behind the door. There are two metal elements, a ring for women and a knocker for men, on most doors.

The integration of Iranian architecture into Islamic culture made Iranian art known in the world as Islamic art and architecture.

**Table 6. Solitude in the examined samples**

Picture	The plan of a secluded place
	
	
	
	
	
	



After the main hall, they would enter the vestibule with the *krias*. It means eight things that came out of the interior spaces of the house and is the only place that has a connection with the outside of the house. This space and the winding corridors leading to the inner and outer courtyards have prevented strangers from seeing into the sacred sanctum of the family. Creating space, dividing space and space for waiting is one of the interesting functions of this element. For Ward Getting to different spaces of the house, including the party space and the interior, must pass through winding corridors

The owner of the house is in his own space, the guests are in another space, and the servants are in their own safe space in such a way that none of them disturbs and disrupts the work and life process of the other, and in other words, the desired level of solitude was provided for them. The spatial modes of Iranian architecture are able to offer the experience of personal and private intimate space along with majestic and magnificent spaces and can offer the experience of closed and semi-closed and open and semi-open spaces in combination with each other until a person feels his soul has taken refuge or achieved an opening.

The connection between the inside of the houses and the outside space in the form that exists today was not discussed, the visual privacy of the residents of the houses was completely ensured and it was not such that every passerby entered the privacy of the house. The design of the houses was often introverted, that is, there were no doors or windows to the outside of the house, and natural light was provided through central courtyards and roofs. In the houses that were designed in the form of cottages or garden houses in the cold climates, usually the privacy of the yard or garden was such that no view from the outside into the house was possible (Basouli M, Omidvari, 2022)

In traditional architecture, listening silence is also considered and provided to some extent. The use of thick walls, in addition to playing the role of thermal insulation, also prevented the entry and exit of sound.

In the urban dimension, the neighborhoods are designed in such a way that different uses are separated in a favorable and appropriate manner and do not disturb each other. In urban spaces, the alleys take twists and turns along the way, which have the role of obstructing the view.

These twists cause the emergence of private spaces along the movement and public paths.

The category of solitude in Islamic architecture is in addition to what was mentioned. From the spiritual aspect, it has been mentioned to Siyar. Muslims followed the example of the Prophet of Islam, who used to go to the mangrove cave for *itikaf* and solitude with the Lord. They chose caves for seclusion and retreat. After the institutionalization of Sufism, this practice led to the formation of a special type of architecture, and mosques also had rooms for *itikaf* from the first periods, and even today, Muslims perform the tradition of *itikaf* and seclusion on special days.

Dupolo, of course, this concept is different from the concept we want in this discussion.

In the architecture of Islamic civilization, we see that in some social buildings such as mosques, monasteries and schools, places are dedicated to this. Places that are also known as "Zaviya" or "Gosheh" or "Kholut Khanah" where the seekers of Allah used to stay and spend their time in retreats like *itikaf*.

Despite the incompleteness of available examples and the absence of houses from the pre-Qajar periods, although we do not have such places in residential buildings, we can guess from some historical reports or even based on the analysis of these devotional affairs and special za'i in the area of the house. did or considered especially that it is inferred from other historical sources such as stories and traditions that there are special spaces for worship at home.

Box houses, post houses, angles, corners and all kinds of spaces that exist are examples of those spaces. Houses with this quality provide people with the opportunity to be alone with themselves and meditate and calculate. He should reflect on himself, search for and find himself and his truth, and this is not possible unless the residential space is in a corner or corner, especially in the "lofts" or the ear room, which nowadays has no specific function.

And sometimes their existence is attributed only to creating a fit with the architect's analogy in the building, and whether it allows such a thing in terms of the possibility of its realization.

To find and show these spaces, several houses from the Pahlavi period in Isfahan have been discussed in table number 6.

### **Solitude in contemporary homes of Iran**

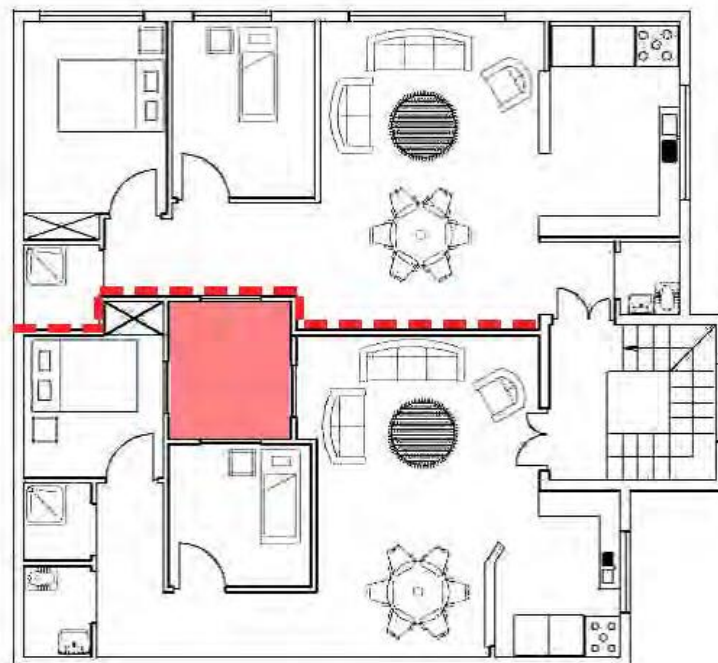
New technology has changed the relationship between street and home and public and private space in many cities today. Occupancy now creates a handy private space. In the modernized world, the walls and doors of our houses are perhaps the most common mechanisms that are used to manage privacy and solitude, and in most cases, no attention has been paid to this issue and no special solution has been considered to maintain and provide it.. Today, in residential complexes, it is possible to provide visual privacy and not auditory privacy, which is a favorable situation. Windows that are completely facing each other and have a direct view of the other, so that the residents of the houses are forced to use blinds etc. in order to maintain their privacy from the view of the nearby tall buildings. In picture 1, you can see examples of neighbors' intentional or unintentional encroachment on each other's privacy.

**Figure 1. Failure to provide visual privacy in contemporary homes and constant use of blinds with shutters to maintain privacy**



The location of the entrance doors of apartment units is usually such that if the door is open, any passerby can easily see inside the house. In terms of listening silence, there is no favorable situation. The walls between the apartment units and common spaces such as skylights and backyards are elements that help the transmission of sound in different parts of the building, causing residents to be dissatisfied with both unwanted hearing of disturbing sounds around them and lack of sound security for themselves. and that in picture number 2, the plan of a residential house is marked and the common border between the two buildings is also marked, which shows that this border is usually very small for two houses and the transmission of sound takes place easily.

**Figure 2. Common border between two units and weak listening silence**



The tall buildings cast a shadow on the surrounding shorter buildings and beyond the sight of the nobles, they prevented the natural light and sun from reaching these buildings, thus disrupting the comfort and peace of the neighbors. Of course, this is largely due to wrong urban planning and lack of proper separation of the urban context. (Differentiating high-order from low-order tissues)

In addition, in places such as elevators, meeting hall entrances, underground trains, and even sandwich shop counters, the possibility of unintentionally entering the personal space of others or vice versa is inevitable, and many people feel uncomfortable in these situations. In such a situation, architects, urban designers and environment and landscape architects can find better answers for the needs of human solitude through the design of real and symbolic barriers and the definition of the internal territories of buildings and external open spaces.

Only in this case and by providing the desired and needed solitude for the members of society, they are able to achieve the main goals of solitude (monitoring the border of oneself and others, the relationship of the individual with others, individual identity).

## Conclusion

Individuals and groups are always seeking to create a balance between their distance from and their closeness to others, because too little or too much separation and distance is not a favorable situation and leads to abnormalities such as isolation and crowding. This issue is important both in internal spaces such as home, workplace, school, and in external spaces such as Park Street alley, etc. For example, regarding the members of a family, it can be said that there should be physical boundaries between the family and the outside world, and between the family members together. And the family members should be free to gather together or live separately depending on the circumstances. In today's societies, for various reasons, solitude has been neglected in all its dimensions. This has led to people's dissatisfaction with their living conditions, while such problems were less common in the architecture of the past, and even though today's facilities and technology are not available to designers and architects, people can at least have peace of mind in their home environment. They were calm and did not worry about others invading their privacy. This is a task for contemporary architects to restore peace and security to today's architectural space by using traditional Iranian architectural patterns and combining them with modern technology. It is in such an environment that every person can discover his abilities and limitations and know where his personality begins and where it should end, as well as supervise his life with more power and achieve the general concept of self-esteem.

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