

Original Research Article

Exploring the Concept of Solitude as a Common Theme in Rumi's Poetry and Architecture (Elements and Decorations)

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Abstract

Introduction: Understanding fundamental concepts in architecture is not possible without considering the cultural and social values of humans. Since humans are social beings, they require four types of relationships for interaction: «God», «Self», «World», and «Fellow Beings». The nature of these interactions shapes the relationship with others. In this context, solitude, as one of the fundamental concepts related to the existential dimensions of human beings and one of the most important qualitative features of the environment, can provide a suitable ground for these interactions. This research has been conducted to examine the concept of solitude in Rumi's thought and answer the question, «What are the instances of solitude in Rumi's architectural elements and decorations?»

Research Method: The present study is fundamental and qualitative research, utilizing meta-analysis and comparative analysis methods. In addition to investigating documents, the data collection method involves exploring theories and viewpoints, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. For the analysis of qualitative data, coding, and examining the frequency of codes extracted from the interviews, the NVivo software is used.

Findings: Based on the theoretical model of the concept of solitude in Rumi's poetry and the logical reasoning strategy derived from the research findings, the fourfold interaction in Rumi's thought emphasizes four states of solitude: «Solitude with Oneself», «Solitude with God», «solitude with a confidant», and «solitude in the company».

Conclusion: Based on the results of this research, the common concepts of solitude in the thought of Rumi and architectural elements and decorations include components such as «imagination», «the coexistence of light and darkness», «void» and «empty space», «the vertical axis of the universe», and «the property of reflection» as concepts related to «solitude with God», and the components of «inner and outer» and «loneliness» in relation to «solitude with oneself» and «intimacy» in relation to solitude with others and the community.

Keywords

Solitude, Architecture, Rumi, Decorations

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Introduction and Problem Definition

Elements and decorations are important parts of Iranian architecture during the Islamic period, and they have always conveyed concepts and meanings beyond mere aesthetics. Islamic architecture is not «form architecture», and its themes are often presented in decorations. In the theory of meaning-oriented scholars, in contrast to the views of formalists, motifs and decorations have a non-historical, mystical, and contemplative nature. From this perspective, decorations are not merely a superficial layer but possess depth and various levels with symbolic and transcendent meanings. In fact, architectural decorations are an inseparable part of Islamic architecture and constitute a major portion. These decorations range from the most minor architectural elements in their simplest form to the most comprehensive and significant parts of architecture, such as domes and prayer halls, made with various materials in beautiful geometric or abstract shapes with different styles. The beauty and splendor of Iranian architecture, especially after the arrival of Islam, depended on its decorations and decorative arts. Architecture constantly reinterprets its spirit in elements such as decorations, in addition to the physical structure of a building. In fact, architectural elements and decorations can embody the sublime concepts related to the existential dimensions of humans. Attention to the sublime concepts associated with the existential dimensions of humans plays a significant role in human tranquility and is one of the main goals of architecture. Among these, one of the most essential sublime concepts related to the existential dimensions of humans is the concept of solitude. Solitude is considered one of the fundamental and influential concepts on humans and their relationship with society, which humans need to achieve tranquility. In Islamic culture, solitude is one of the most essential spiritual needs for self-reflection and heartfelt connection with the Creator. In fact, «solitude» is one of the fundamental characteristics of all human cultures that should not be violated without reason. Deep-rooted beliefs in Eastern mysticism and various rituals and religions in Iran have also made having a private space for solitude one of the important elements in Iranian architecture. In Islamic period architecture, specific places for this purpose were allocated to public buildings like mosques, Khanqahs, or schools. These places are also known as corners, hermitages, or secluding rooms, where «seekers of God» used to perform rituals like seclusion or spiritual retreat. The definition of the concept of solitude is very complex. It includes various dimensions, and numerous theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted in different fields, such as psychology, mysticism, literature, and architecture, about the concept of solitude. Considering that the prevailing thoughts in each cultural era are influenced by the ideas of several thinkers, philosophers, mystics, and scholars of that time, from this perspective, the Masnavi and other works of Rumi are among the most essential sources of the seventh century and even the centuries that followed. Engaging with them can have a significant impact on the concept of solitude in architecture. The present research aims to examine the concept of solitude in Rumi's thought and to find instances of Rumi's solitude in architectural elements and decorations. Concerning this topic, the question arises: «What are the instances of Rumi's solitude in architectural elements and decorations?»

Research Method

The present research approach is qualitative, utilizing the Grounded Theory method. This method is a qualitative research approach that develops a theory through data categorization. The Grounded Theory is typically implemented in three ways: the Glaserian, Systematic, and Emergent Methods. In the present research, the Systematic Method, attributed to Strauss and Corbin, has been used for data analysis. The Systematic Method

itself consists of three main stages: selective coding, axial coding, and open coding (Straus & Corbin, 2017). The statistical population of this research includes experts and university professors in architecture. The data collection method includes document study, viewpoints, open-ended interviews, and questionnaires. In this research, interviews were conducted with 35 individuals. In-depth interviews were conducted with questions about the concept of solitude in Rumi's poetry. To analyze qualitative data and codes extracted from interviews, the NVivo software was used, and at the end, a theoretical model of the themes of solitude in Rumi's poetry was presented. With the help of conceptualization, case study, and comparative analysis of the concepts of solitude, examples of its architecture were provided. The process of conducting the research is presented in Fig 1.

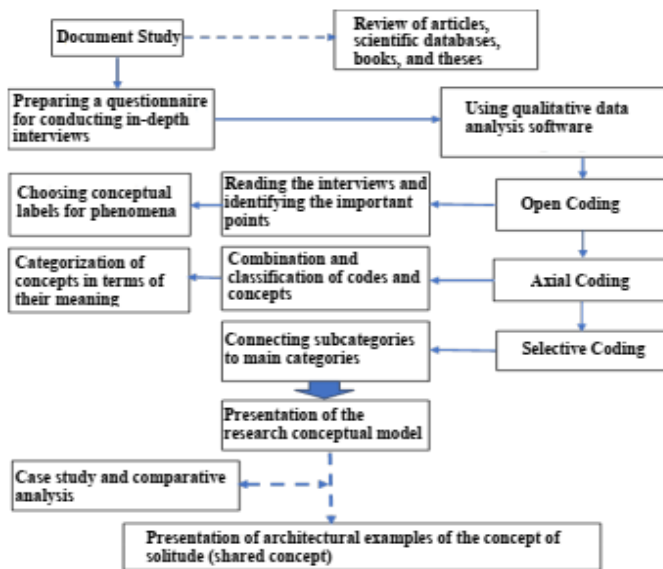


Fig 1. Research process. Source: Authors.

Research Background

While examining the components of creating solitude in mosques, «Borhanifar, Mazhari, Taghavi, Vasiq, and Ashrafzadeh» (2022) emphasize three states of solitude. These states of solitude can accompany and be intertwined with each other, depending on the conditions of the individual. The first state is «solitude with oneself», created through components such as «attention to the inner journey for union with truth, prayer, contemplation, remembrance, reliance, introversion, inner and outer, hierarchy and dynamism, fluidity, pause». The second state is «solitude with God», shaped by elements such as the coexistence of light and darkness, the center, the void, and the journey from multiplicity to unity. Finally, the third state is «solitude in the community», created through effective communication, empathy, verbal communication, and non-verbal communication. The results also emphasize elements such as the geometry of the patterns used in the «Shamsa» mosques, the presence of Quranic inscriptions, and the covering of the building's surfaces with layers of diverse patterns and colors, the spatial and structural organization, the orientation towards the Qibla and centrality, the connection between the inner and outer, the alternation of light and darkness, the rhythm of the arches in the courtyard, the minaret, and the dome in line with «solitude with oneself and God», and elements such as the courtyard and the prayer

hall in line with «solitude in community». Additionally, in another study with a human-centered approach, «Borhanifar et al.» (2021) examined fourteen indicators related to four main components in «the impact of solitude on social interactions in the 600-unit residential complex in Mashhad» and presented analytical results. In part of the research findings, it is stated that the designer's attention to the indicators and components influencing interactions with a focus on preserving solitude has played a decisive role in enhancing the interactions of the residents of the complex. The distinction between public and private spaces is not only one of the ways to achieve an ideal solitude and constructive interaction among residents, but also paying attention to individuals' privacy through control and clarity of boundaries is an important and effective factor in social interactions. Defining boundaries through separating semi-private spaces between public and private areas, while increasing individuals' sense of control, leads to a tendency for constructive interaction with others. «Charkhchyan and Daneshpour» (2011) emphasize in their research on new urban residential complexes the provision of privacy in two main areas, namely family privacy and personal privacy, as two influential components in ensuring the peace and security of residents. «Khamenehzadeh» (2017) has addressed the architecture of the Iranian house in «the concept of solitude and how it is realized in the living world of the Iranian house». While discussing the concept of «solitude» and examining this concept in the realm of Islamic culture, «Arzmand and Khani» (2012) emphasized the two relationships of «solitude with oneself» and «solitude with God». «Semnani» (1983), «Esfarayeni» (1979), and «Najm al-Din Razi» (1994) have written numerous treatises entitled «Adab al-Khalwa» and «Asrar al-Khalwa» regarding the conditions, manner, desirability, and benefits of solitude, as it is one of the important topics among Sufis. «Allameh Muhammad Taqi Jafari» discusses the fourfold relationships, which include «the relationship of man with himself», «the relationship of man with God», «the relationship of man with the universe», and «the relationship of man with other men», stating: «Essentially, in the realm of religion, there is a universal and experiential understanding in these fourfold relationships that answers the fundamental questions of human existence» (Jafari, 2007, 26). So far, thinkers in various fields have provided different answers regarding this subject. «Mawlana Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi» (604-672), in his works, especially in the Masnavi Ma'navi, alongside other mystical topics, speaks of four types of relationships: «God», «self», «world», and «fellow beings». Rumi always emphasizes his works' ethical foundations and principles and seeks to explain and elucidate them. Among the topics related to the existential levels of humans and the fourfold connections in Rumi's thought is «solitude». A review of previous studies shows that the concept of solitude in Iranian architecture is mostly in the realm of «solitude in the house» or «solitude in Islamic culture». The present research presents examples of Rumi's solitude in public architectural buildings of the Safavid period in the city of Isfahan.

Theoretical Foundations

1. The stages of Solitude in the Thought of Rumi

1.1. Solitude with Oneself: Choosing solitude is one of the paths of spiritual journeying, striving, and self-discipline for the traveler residing on the path. It has stages through which one passes the ranks, states one after another, and becomes adorned with divine attributes. From the perspective of mystics, the only way, or at least the most correct way, to this knowledge is indeed the knowledge of one's own self (Kakaei, 2003, 279). From Rumi's perspective, the initial stages of solitude involve focusing on the truth and the essential nature of oneself; therefore, he emphasizes the mysticism of the self and paying attention

to the inner states to reach the truth, saying: «I will not emerge from this solitude / For I am occupied with the inner states» (Rumi, 2010, 1/594). In Rumi's thought, «No knowledge is more noble than the knowledge of self-awareness». He says, «Knowledge is a sacred and pure gem that helps a person to know themselves» (Zamani, 2004, 320). In this regard, Rumi believes in two types of «self»; the first is the true self, which has a deep connection with God and its roots lie in its attachment to Him, and the second is the false self, meaning the self that a person artificially creates for themselves and which hinders the discovery of the true self. This «self» may be the product of their mental constructs or may be shaped by social relationships; in other words, it is the personality that others have given them (Khajehgir & Ahmadvour Mobarakeh, 2014). Rumi says to achieve the «true self»: «Strive in selflessness, find yourself/ Sooner, and God knows best» (Rumi, 2010, 4/3218). Rumi also emphasizes solitude for achieving the true self and combating the false self, saying: «Turn your face to the wall and sit alone/ And seclude yourself from your own existence» (Rumi, 2010, 1/645). Therefore, «solitude with oneself» or «journey from oneself to the truth» refers to being alone and distancing oneself from people to purify and refine the soul, self-awareness, and communion with God. The seeker, by purifying the soul and cleansing the inner self from worldly impurities, polishing the mirror of the heart and removing the dark veils, becomes adorned with divine attributes. The remembrance of God always accompanies this type of solitude and includes «solitude with God».

1.2. Solitude with God: «Remembrance, Silence, and Stillness, Connection with the Universe»

1.2.1. The Remembrance of «Solitude with God»: One of the fundamental conditions for seclusion, retreat, and meditation is the continuity of «Remembrance» (dhikr); «Remembrance» has a broad reflection in the teachings of the Sufi path, and the mystics have always emphasized in their works that without the continuity of remembrance, one should not expect change and transformation in the seeker. Just as milk nourishes and nurtures the child, it is also a tool for encouraging the soul and reaching higher spiritual levels within the seeker (Nasafi, 1993, 153). «Suhrawardi» in «Awarif al-Ma'arif» says that the essence of seclusion among Sufis is remembrance (dhikr) and the preservation of time; thus, the seeker must sit in solitude and persist in remembrance. «Whoever wishes to ascend from the realm of testimony to the realm of the unseen, they need to turn away from the world and the attraction of wealth, sit in solitude, and persist in remembrance and contemplation until they ascend from the depths of the realm of testimony to the heights of the realm of the unseen» (Suhrawardi, 1995, 100). In Rumi's thought, remembrance is a means to erase all impurities, making the mirror of the heart receptive to divine light by expelling the strangers from the soul.

1.2.2. Silence and Stillness «Solitude with God»: «Silence and Stillness»¹ are among the concepts related to the notion of solitude as envisioned by Rumi. At times, Rumi has expressed truths with penetrating language, and at other times, with profound and enigmatic silence. The silence and stillness of Rumi are not of the nature of incapacity and helplessness; instead, they are a means to convey better the meanings he has recounted to us. Seekers choose silence to traverse the stages of the spiritual journey. The silence in the initial stages of the journey is called «seeker's silence»², and the silence in the higher stages is called «mystic's silence». Philosophically-theoretically, mystical silence is of two kinds: «ontological silence» and «epistemological silence» (Dabbagh, 2007, 34). «Ontological silence» signifies infinity and the union of the seeker with the truth, while epistemological silence, which Rumi considers to be a necessity at this stage, cannot articulate these mystical states; therefore, one chooses silence (Arefzadeh, 2010). This silence is achieved through

the recognition and understanding of the truth. «Silence in the realm of knowledge»³, not attained through books, lessons, and schools, is also referred to as 'ilm al-yaqin⁴. If the seeker continues their upward journey from this epistemological silence, they first steps into the valley of love and then reaches the state of annihilation (Arefzadeh, 2010). In truth, the solitude with God at higher stages is the same state of «knowledge» where a person, through the understanding of the truth and the inability to articulate mystical states, chooses silence. Therefore, the highest stage of solitude with God (inner solitude) encompasses epistemological silence and, through the upward journey from the three stages of knowledge to love and then annihilation, can lead the servant to the divine court.

1.2.3. Connection with the World of Creation, «Solitude with God»: In the thought of Rumi, the elements of nature manifest the truth, and the manifestations of the divine are present: «All creation does nothing but one task, and that is to reveal the hidden treasure» (Rumi, 2010, 166). The absolute beauty of the Almighty God is sacred, and due to its intensity, it is hidden from creation. Seeing Him directly is impossible, and even intermediaries are in absolute non-existence about the truth (Ahmadi Maleki, 2008, 32). In this regard, Rumi says: «The speech of water, the speech of soil, and the speech of flowers/ are perceptible to the senses of the people of heart» (Rumi, 2010, 1/ 3279). In truth, the world of creation and every place, like a garden in Rumi's thought, is a means for knowing and solitude with God (Shahidi, 2001, Vol. 2, 329-330). In these verses, it is said that the grace we see in the garden is from the Almighty God, and the one who is a person of meaning, when he does not look at these beauties, knows that they are nothing but from God (Shahidi, 2001, Vol. 2, 330).

1.3. Solitude in the Community, «Solitude in the Company»: Contrary to a group of Sufis who advocate for isolation and distancing from society, Rumi emphasizes the importance of presence and participation in society and among the people, considering it one of the necessities of the path to perfection. In the debate «The Bird and the Hunter» (Rumi, 2010, 6/483-478), Rumi also addresses monasticism, discussing the positive consequences of social life and rejecting the renunciation of the world and monasticism in Islam and the tradition of the Prophet (PBUH) (Fathollahi & Sahraei, 2013). In fact, Rumi had his inner solitude in every place, whether alone or a community, from the rooftop of the school and the garden to the bathhouse (Aflaki, 1996, 80; Sepahsalar, 2008, 88). Sometimes, he would find peace in the basement of the bathhouse, where his companions would spread carpets and silk cloths (Aflaki, 1996, Vol. 1, 126). Sometimes, he would sit in the middle of the warm bath and speak of meanings, while his companions would create a commotion (Aflaki, 1996, 223). Rumi not only did not distance himself from people but was always utterly devoted to them, wherever he was, and maintained his inner solitude. Most of the time, Rumi spent his days in solitude and asceticism in the treasury of the bathhouse. When he became weary from the multitude of people and the conversations of the worldly, he would go to the bathhouse: «The Lord God, when He became weary from the multitude of people and their conversations, went to the bathhouse, for in the bathhouse, too, there is the burden of being in the water» (Sepahsalar, 2008, 104). After these long periods of asceticism in the bathhouse, Rumi would become absorbed in the divine light of union and express profound mystical meanings. In most cases, the ghazal reciters and listeners would leave the bathhouse with their companions (Pishvaei & Ghayomi Bidhendi, 2013). «Solitude in the community» from Rumi's perspective is the same as «solitude in the company»; it is a state of inner solitude where a sincere person⁵ is engaged in the remembrance of the divine in any place and all emotional states; thus, while interacting with a group, people can still be in solitude with the divine within themselves.

Presentation of the Conceptual Model of Rumi's Solitude

The conclusion and summary of the above discussions indicate that Rumi, in his works alongside other mystical topics, speaks of four types of connections: (connection with God, self, the world, and fellow beings) and considers solitude as one of the existential stages of a person so that the seeker can traverse these stages one after another and be adorned with divine attributes. Figure 2 illustrates the stages of solitude in Rumi's thoughts about the fourfold connection.

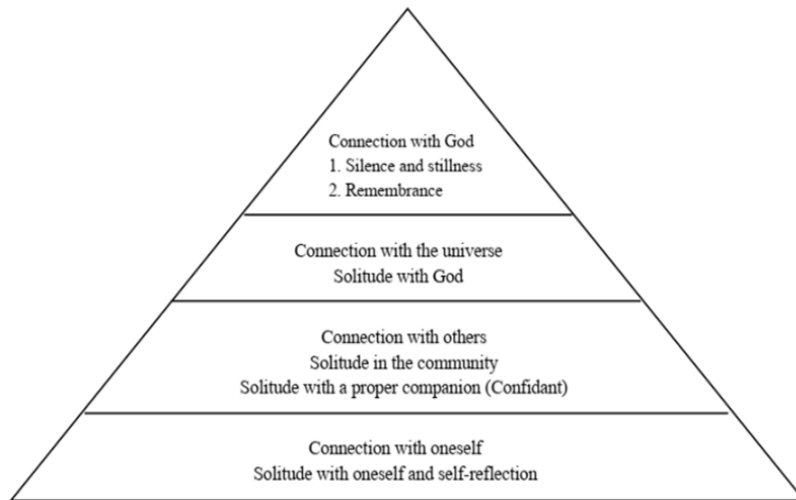


Fig 2. The stages of solitude in the thought of Rumi, considering the fourfold connections. Source: Authors.

By studying the interviews of 35 selected researchers and scholars of Rumi and identifying the common and essential points of the concepts presented in the interviews, coding, combining, and categorizing the concepts were carried out using the capabilities of NVivo software. In the modeling phase, «data evaluation» was conducted, establishing logical connections between the codes and categories extracted from the interviews with the 35 researchers. A conceptual model of solitude in Rumi's poetry was developed, which is displayed in Fig 3.

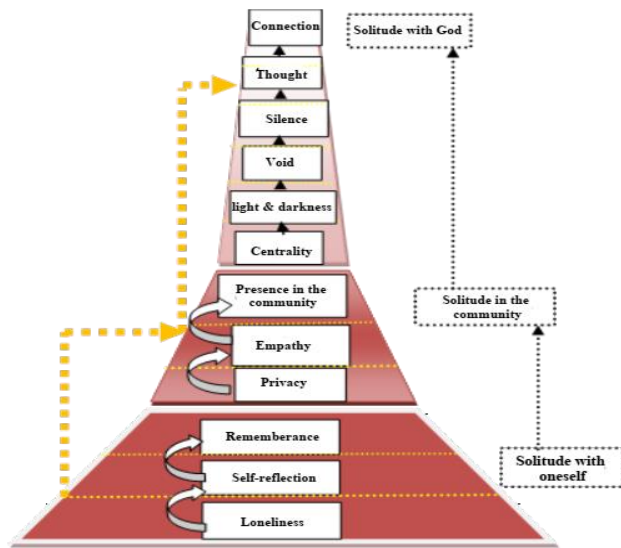



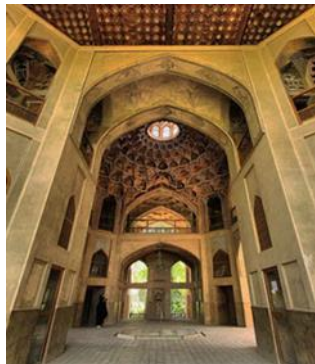
Fig 3. Conceptual model of solitude creation in Rumi's poetry. Source: Authors.

Common Concepts of Solitude in Rumi and Architecture


In this section, after examining and presenting the components that constitute the concept of solitude in Rumi's poetry and developing a conceptual model of solitude in his verses, its architectural instances were studied. Considering the common concepts of solitude in Rumi's thought and their instances in architectural elements and decorations, the research results also emphasize concepts such as the timeless and spaceless imagination, the juxtaposition of light and darkness, void and empty space, vertical centrality, the property of reflection, solitude, and the inner-outer dichotomy. Table 1 shows the common concepts related to Rumi's concept of solitude and architecture and their formal instances in architectural elements and decorations.

Table 1. Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture (architectural elements and decorations). Source: Authors.

Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture		Examples in poetry and architecture
Imagination (non-spatial) — Rumi	Emphasis on the presence of God's light in the «non-spatial» and «non-temporal»	صورتش بر خاک و جان بر لامکان / لامکانی فوق وهم سالکان لامکانی نه که در فهم آیدت / هر دمی در وی خیالی زایدت لامکانی که در او نور خداست / ماضی و مستقبل و حال از کجا

Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture		Examples in poetry and architecture
Architecture	<p>Stopping time: «Transcending temporal time and manifesting time in an eternal moment» «Passing and transitioning from motion to stillness, from time to eternity, and from human to divine».</p> <p>The enigmatic presence of water, light, and the motifs and muqarnas of the arch and dome in the central space of Hasht Behesht, Isfahan, has brought forth the celestial existence of that world through imagination and spirit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The center is a manifestation of the divine essence. 2. The presence of light is the key to the manifestation of God's presence. 3. Reflection of light from the water surface and its dispersion in the space <p>In this architecture, light, like a sacred element reflecting the presence of God in various degrees of manifestation, enters the space sparingly, cautiously, and yet artistically. It becomes so intertwined with its contrasting and complementary element, darkness, that the central space is preserved in a mystical reconciliation of light and darkness, symbolizing the manifestation of its form and transcendent beauty.</p>	<p>Stopping time in the company of the center, light, and water</p>   <p>Skylight of the central space of the Hasht Behesht Palace http://archnet.org/library</p>

Continuation of Table 1. Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture (architectural elements and decorations). Source: Authors.

Contemplation (solitude with God)	Architecture	<p>The focus and tranquility created by the Shamsa motifs not only introduce a fixed point of view and a stationary human but also, while alluding to the unity and oneness of God, play a significant role in stimulating contemplation and solitude. The covering of the building's surfaces with layers of diverse patterns and colors is also another influential factor in the contemplation and tranquility of individuals.</p>	 <p>Shamsa motifs in Hasht Behesht Source: www.archnet.org</p>
The coexistence of opposites,	Rumi	<p>In the thought of Rumi, light is the manifestation of God's presence. The emphasis on solitude with God in the darkness of night is to receive divine light and attain divine secrets and mysteries.</p>	<p>چو شب به خلوت معراج تو مشرف شد/ به آفتاب نظر می کند به صد خواری</p>

Architecture

Light in Islamic architecture is a manifestation of the presence of God. The coexistence of light and darkness, and the controlled presence of light in the interiors of mosques through lattice windows, play a significant role in the manifestation of divine light and the sense of solitude for individuals. The focused light of the windows, along with the expansion and spread of light in the space of the prayer hall, is also an influential factor in the contraction and expansion of emotions. The darkness of the corridors, while causing individuals to forget the outside world and focus inward, intensifies the feeling of God's presence. The coexistence of light and darkness in the mosque space not only evokes an opportunity to pause, detach from the material world, and connect with divine light, but also brings a sense of stillness, emptiness, and solitude.




The coexistence of light and darkness in the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque: Continuity and sequence of light, contraction and expansion, and the feeling of emptiness




Continuation of Table 1. Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture (architectural elements and decorations). Source: Authors.

Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture		Examples in poetry and architecture
Vertical axis around a center (solitude with God)	<p>Rumi</p> <p>Emphasis on the sky and its beauties is a path towards true existence and points to the vertical axis of the universe around a center.</p>	<p>آواز داد اختر بس روشنست امشب / گفتم ستارگان را مه با منست امشب برو به بام بالا از بهر الصلا را / گل چیدنست امشب می خوردنست امشب تا روز ساغر می در گردش است و بخشش / تا روز گل به خلوت با سوسنست امشب</p>

Architecture	<p>The symbol of the dome, the sky, and its center as the axis of the world, along with the emphasis on the vertical direction around the center as a sacred axis, represents the movement of all components of existence towards perfection and the concept of divinity.</p> <p>The presence of the suns, like stars around the sun, emphasizes the vertical axis of the universe, accompanied by a sense of emptiness and unity in multiplicity.</p> <p>This type of pattern under the dome of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque draws the gaze from the bottom to the top and to the apex of the dome. At this point, all forms dissolve and become one, symbolizing unity with God. These patterns not only represent the sense of multiplicity within unity but also play a significant role in the solitude and concentration of individuals by expanding and opening within the human being.</p>	
		<p>The design under the dome of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque. Source: http://archnet.org</p>

Continuation of Table 1. Common concepts related to the concept of solitude in Rumi and architecture (architectural elements and decorations). Source: Authors.

Rumi	Emphasis on addressing inner states	<p>من نخواهم شد ازین خلوت برون / زانک مشغولم باحوال درون</p>
Inner and outer (solitude with oneself)	Architecture	<p>To enter the mosque's corridor, one must pass through the mosque's forecourt. The forecourt of the «Sheikh Lotfollah» mosque features a recessed pre-space from the wall of Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which in fact offers a warm invitation into the mosque. The entrance in architecture signifies passage and movement, and the corridor space is the space of transition, solitude, and wonder.</p> <p>This dark corridor separates the outside world from the inside of the mosque and prepares the worshipper for entering this sacred place. The darkness of the space causes the person to forget the outside world and focus on the higher realm, feeling their presence in this place. This space is the point of connection between the outside and inside of the mosque. The light and darkness of this space provide an opportunity for worshippers to pause, linger, and find solitude.</p> <p>Introversion and covering oneself from the outside and turning attention inward; the corridor of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque</p>
Loneliness (solitude with oneself)	Rumi	<p>که مرا عیسی چنین پیغام کرد / کز همه یاران و خویشان باش فرد روی در دیوار کن، تنها نشین / وز وجود خویش هم خلوت گزین</p>
		

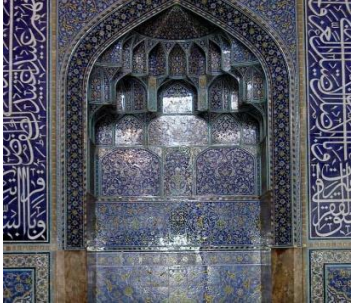
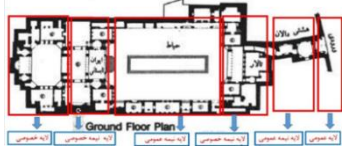
	<p>Architecture</p> <p>The presence of Quranic inscriptions in mosques is also an influential factor in the manifestation of the remembrance and mention of God.</p>	 <p>The presence of Quranic inscriptions in the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque</p>
<p>Confidant (Solitude with God)</p>	<p>Rumi</p> <p>Silence and stillness against the truths, considering that one does not find a worthy companion and confidant to share secrets with.</p>	<p>چون که نامحرم درآید از درم / پرده در پنهان شوند اهل حرم و درآید محرمی دور از گزند / برگشایند آن ستیران روی بند ما سمیعیم و بصیریم و خوشیم / با شما نامحرمان ما خامشیم</p>
<p>Architecture</p>	<p>Responding to privacy in traditional Iranian houses Creating layers of privacy, public, semi-private, and semi-public spaces to achieve varying degrees of solitude through spatial, functional, and introverted hierarchies.</p>	

Table 2 presents a comparative analysis of the concepts of solitude in Rumi's poetry and their formal manifestations in architectural elements and decorations, providing a final summary of the research findings.

Table 2. Summary of the comparative comparison between the concepts of solitude in Rumi's poetry and its formal examples in architecture. Source: Authors.

Concepts	Rumi's Poetry	Examples in Architecture
Loneliness (Self-reflection) Seclusion loneliness Delaram-Sakineh	* * * *	Backroom, store-room, corner, hermitage, secluding room
Imagination (non-spatial, non-temporal) Thought	* *	Designing a center and stopping time at a point in space In the central space of the «Hasht Behesht» palace The focus and stillness created by the «Shamsa» motifs
Void and empty space Silence-stillness	* *	Empty space in mosques
Inner and outer Privacy	* *	The courtyard and corridor of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

Concepts	Rumi's Poetry	Examples in Architecture
		Responding to privacy in traditional Iranian houses through spatial hierarchy and introversion
Rememberance	*	The presence of Quranic inscriptions in mosques
Centrality	*	The central space in the Hasht Behesht Palace
Reflection	*	The reflective property of water in Chehel Sotoun
Light-darkness	*	The controlled presence of light alongside darkness in the corridor of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque
Confidant	*	Privacy and the separation of private and public spaces in traditional Iranian houses
Vertical centrality of universe	*	The secret of the dome, the sky, and the center as the axis of the world in the dome of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

Conclusion

Solitude with God in the thought of Rumi is associated with concepts such as silence and stillness, imagination, light and darkness, the vertical axis of the universe, connection with the world, emptiness, and void space. In line with answering the main research question and finding instances of Rumi's solitude in architectural elements and decorations, the concepts corresponding to the instances of solitude in architecture were presented in Table 2. Based on the analyses, concepts such as solitude, seclusion, and tranquility manifest in architectural plans such as corners, backrooms, and secluding rooms. The controlled presence of light (the coexistence of light and darkness) in the entrance corridor of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque separates the outside world from the interior of the mosque. It prepares the worshipper for entering this sacred place. The darkness of the space causes the individual to forget the outside world and feel their presence in this place. Concepts such as imagination (non-spatial and non-temporal) and contemplation emerge in the design of the center and the middle of the structure, a point in the central space of buildings like the «Hasht Behesht» palace and the «Sheikh Lotfollah» mosque, which are capable of stopping time. The enigmatic presence of water, light, and the patterns and muqarnas of the arch and dome in the central space of both buildings bring the non-spatial realm into manifestation through imagination and spirit. The void in the empty space of the mosques takes on a physical form. Emptying the middle of the space and emphasizing the central space, while inviting humans into the space, alludes to a sense of divine presence. «The center in mosques is built based on empty space and vacuum and is accompanied by the manifestation of multiplicity in unity». «A space without tension and direction, devoid of any positive form that conveys the concept of nothingness and reminds one of God when looking around». Using the element of water, the reflective property eliminates the boundary between the realm of senses and imagination by uniting matter and its image within itself. Here, the senses and imagination become one through water and its reflective property. «The transformation of the material world into metaphorical forms by eliminating the

boundary between reality and metaphor through water» is observable in the architecture of «Chehel Sotoun».

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Conflict of Interest

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Appendix

1. In general, silence in Sufism is considered a type of asceticism that the diligent seeker must observe, and among the conditions of spiritual journeying are silence and refraining from idle speech (Orad al-Ahbab, 68 & 119); as quoted from the Glossary of Sufi Terms, Goharin, Vol. 7-8, 178-189.
2. Moral Silence (Prudent) (Seeker's Silence): This silence pertains to the evils of the tongue, and the seeker of the path of truth must first cleanse their path from moral vices. Therefore, the mystics of the path of truth recommend to the seekers, alongside reduced sleep and reduced eating, to practice speaking less and speaking selectively (Arefzadeh, 2010).
3. Rumi attributes this silence and stillness to two reasons: 1. The vision of the majesty and greatness of the truth 2. The vision of the beauty of the truth: When the heart is filled with the scent of that beloved, the tongue becomes utterly bewildered (Arefzadeh, 2010, 3/3842).
4. Any knowledge that leads humanity to an inner journey and true understanding of the world and the truth, and whose realization is through certainty and revelation, is called «ilm al-yaqin» (Goharin, 2003, 7/215). Rumi says: «The book of the Sufi is not ink and letters/ Except for a heart as white as snow/ The scholar's provisions are the marks of the pen/ The Sufi's provisions are the marks of the foot» (Rumi, 2010, 2/159-160).
5. Ikhlas (Sincerity) means keeping one's intention and purpose pure. It is free from any consideration of the non-true and from all worldly and otherworldly pleasures. Some have said that the aim of the action should be solely to draw closer to God Almighty. Apparently, what Rumi means by «the purity of the soul» is a precise and subtle level of Ikhlas (Furuzanfar, 2001, 170).

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