

## The Entrance Door is the Main Element in the Traditional Architecture of Iran

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**Abstract.** The general points of architectural characteristics of entrance doors (in traditional architecture) of residential buildings in Iranian cities are considered, using the example of the city of Dezful, associated with natural-climatic, architectural-constructive and traditional factors. The characteristics of the traditional architecture of the entrance doors of residential buildings in the city of Dezful are considered: an analysis of the used natural resources that contribute to the formation of architecture and the construction of such masterpieces. The article deals with the special religious influence in the architecture of different periods: for example, in Islamic architecture, items such as the preservation of the hijab were also added to houses. It is safe to say that in Islamic architecture, the design of houses was based on preserving the privacy of women. For example, the height of the front door of residential buildings built in this period was less than human height, so that there was no view of strangers in the house. To achieve the ionic goal, taking into account the hierarchy of entrances, when designing an entrance, using intermediate spaces, such as *hasti* (after entering through the entrance doors, we enter a space covered by a domed vault), and then enter a not long corridor, and then into a courtyard surrounded by walls decorated with brick patterns.

### Introduction

The objectives of this study is to identify the architectural features of the main element in the architecture of different periods, such as the front door, in the residential buildings of Iran, including the city of Dezful.

The research methodology is based on a social survey: using scientific and architectural resources of the relevant subject, analyzing the content of various articles on the topic, studying the old buildings of the city.

The entrance portal is the main element in the traditional architecture of Iran. In Iranian residential buildings, it is mainly located in the center of the façade. And also all architectural and decorative elements are located along a symmetrical axis. But in the historical city of Dezful, the architectural and decorative solution, due to the structure of the city planning, differs from other cities of Iran. Which contributes to the enhancement of the architectural value of the city.

Basically, on the street and internal facades of residential buildings in the city, all elements with decorative and architectural-constructive functions are located along a non-symmetrical axis, but in general they represent an interesting harmony, attracting the attention of any spectator and specialist. That contributes to the selection of the city in terms of architectural and artistic values among other residential buildings of Iranian cities of different periods.

The front door is one of the most important elements in traditional architecture. The door of the main entrance separates the inner world from the material world and also provides the security function for the residents of the house. During the reign of the Qajar dynasty, in the architecture of residential and public buildings, the taming of all elements, not only internal, but also material, was assessed.

In the historical period of Iran before the advent of modernism, the Iranian people had special traits formed from Zoroastrianism and Islam, which had a strong influence on culture and, accordingly, in architecture and art.

## Architectural analysis of the entrance doors in the traditional architecture of Iran

In traditional Iranian architecture, traces of cultural and folk customs were clearly visible. In Iranian and Eastern customs in general, it was accepted that close or distant relatives, neighbors were interested in communicating with each other. The tradition and culture of any nation, and also in Iran, has a strong influence on architecture and naturally in art. Therefore, the design of structures with any function (residential, trade, religious, recreation areas) was done on the basis of such custom. At that time, people communicated in trading places, for example, a bazaar, in a teahouse, or gathered in near houses, on the basis of which benches were provided (and this, of course, in non-official invitations). The design of a residential building by function was divided into two parts: Internal and external. On detailed external elements consist of a door of the main entrance of a stone bench (if possible, the financial condition of the owner of a residential building), a tympanum. One of the elements provided for the communication of the inhabitants of each house is a bench. In the side parts of the entrance door there are stone benches, which were called “feast” in traditional architecture - seating for old people to rest. The adult generation, passing through the streets, who needed a second of rest, sat down on benches. And another function of the benches is a place for neighbors to meet, in the evenings after the day's work. Most of the neighboring women, at the invitation of the hostess, threw themselves off and talked. Ideally, the benches had ample space, which made it possible to organize a modest tea party in the evening. The benches are located under the portal. An enclosed space that protects bench spaces from rain, snow and the sun's rays in the heat of summer. In a culture for which it was important to hide the woman from the gaze of strangers, a closed place for women to gather and rest is the most appropriate space.

The door is framed by a frame, the so-called "Astana". There are flat walls on the left and right sides of the frame. In the upper part of the door there is a beam that performs a constructive function. Above the beam is a tympanum, decorated with decorative patterns called Hovene. According to the stylistic characteristics of Iranian architecture of that period, in most of the residential buildings of the city, the entrance door was framed with decorative arches in the form of rectangular, semicircular or lancet. At the top of the arch, there are two decorative arches. The front door is made of wood, and is mostly double-leaf. On each leaf of the door there will be a knocker (beater), which announces to the owner the genus of the person entering the door. According to this scheme, the knocker is classified into two types - male and female (the provided beater for women is on the left door leaf, and for men on the right). Men will knock on the door with a knocker in the form of a lion head, a man's fist, a hammer, etc., and the knocker designed for women has a more delicate shape - an angel, a woman's shelf, etc (Fig.1). In the corresponding type of beater, the sounds are ringing (for women, knocks louder) and deaf (for men, knock louder and lower). And when the male and female knockers knock at the same time, it announces to the owner that the family has come to visit. From the inside, the door is closed with a bolt (bolt is a large bolt. It is mainly used to lock doors, gates, hatches, etc. In simple cases (Wikipedia, bolt). Bolts are of different types. The bolt was created from wooden or metallic material (Fig.2).



Fig. 1. Knockers: male (left) and female (right)

The entrance doors were framed with wooden frames protruding three, four centimeters from the door surfaces.

In the lower part of the entrance door frame, thresholds were located, designed to provide two functions. The first stage of the thresholds separates the internal space from the external, and also prevents the influx of rainwater into the courtyard. In the history of Iranian traditional architecture

and culture of different periods, the thresholds of the front door had a special meaning. For example, in some era it was forbidden to stand on the thresholds. In traditional Iranian culture, rapids were so important that during the reign of the Safavids, a law was passed, according to which, before the entrance of the Ali-Gapu palace, people who worshiped on their knees were obliged to kiss the thresholds. The person who broke the law was addressed according to the sentences imposed.



Fig. 2. Bolt made of wood and metal

In Iranian traditional architecture, form, proportions, decorative elements are directly related to the culture of a particular period. In the architecture of the Islamic period, doors, columns, walls of the street and internal façades, tympanums were decorated with religious designs. According to the mass sections of society, a person passing from under the front door was protected with written prayers over the door or tympanum.

The doors were made of wood and were rectangular in shape. Various forms appeared in the Gajar period.

The tympanum is decorated with patterns of brickwork, the so-called Hovun. In the art of ancient Iran, the words Hovun and Frize were famous (Art. 50, Naima, Dezful city of bricks). But over time, these words were not used so much in the Persian language that the younger generation turned out to be European.

Architecture in Iran has two main stages - before the adoption of Islam and after. Taken together, there are great similarities in the architecture of these periods and, of course, the points that have been added over time. Which acted on the design of palaces, cultural and business centers, spiritual and religious centers. Residential buildings built in the Gajar period (after Islam) have signs of religion. Naturally, the view of art historians, specialists (in different directions), architects, as well as ordinary people of this period is very different from the previous one. Especially the Desful people are considered the most religious in comparison with some of the peoples of other cities. And this has a more striking effect on the socio-cultural state and the atmosphere of life of the people of this city.

In Iranian culture for a long time, "family" has an important place. For Iranian men, ensuring the comfort of family members is one of the main responsibilities. Protecting the safety and privacy of families is considered important. Because factors like the culture, beliefs and economics of each nation have a direct impact on architecture, homes have been designed to ensure that privacy and security are taken into account when providing comfort to family members. Therefore, in Iranian culture, after the adoption of Islam, there have been dramatic changes in people's beliefs: including the preservation of the hijab for women from the point of view of non-mahrams (unfamiliar men are not bloodshed). That is to say, religion has had a deeper influence on architecture. In pre-Islamic architecture, the houses and palaces of kings were designed to preserve only the comfort and dignity of the family, but in Islamic architecture items such as the preservation of the hijab were also added to the houses. It is safe to say that in Islamic architecture, the design of houses was based on the preservation of the privacy of women. For example, the height of the front door of residential buildings built in this period was less than human height, so that there was no direct view of strangers into the house (members of seven). To achieve the goal (the absence of a direct view into the house), taking into account the hierarchy of entrances, intermediate spaces such as *hasti* are used when designing the entrance. Entering through the entrance doors, we find ourselves in a space covered

with a domed vault, and then we enter a not long corridor, and then into a courtyard surrounded by beautiful walls.

The next important element in front of the front door is the jelokhan. In ancient Iranian culture, the family has an important status, it should also be noted that the guest has special respect. Accordingly, by preserving the shrines and the status of home owner and guest, spaces were created in Iran's traditional homes that added value to the architecture of the period. One such space that is discussed in this article is the jelokhan. Jelokhan is an element that has played an important role in traditional architecture and urban planning. Jelokhan consists of two words "jelo", which means before, and khan, which means hane (house). As the meaning of this word implies, Jelokhan is a space that was built in front of a house and is usually surrounded on several sides. Jelokhan was designed in traditional architecture as an intermediate space in front of the entrance door of residential buildings, mosques, markets, baths, caravanserais and is considered one of the most important elements of architecture and urban planning. Studying the architecture of the past, we find that the main spaces could not be connected without the intermediate spaces. For example, to enter private or public spaces in a home, intermediate spaces such as corridors have always been used. The spaces connecting the outside of the house to the inside were designed to preserve the dignity of the members of the house, and before entering the house, the person's mind was ready to enter the house. Thus, pausing before entering the house, the person was subconsciously ready to separate the outside world from the inner house. This architectural element simultaneously unites and separates the interior and exterior space of the house, which contributes to the particular attention of any viewer. Jelokhan provides different functions in the architecture of residential buildings. For example, the creation of social relations between neighbors, to attract the attention of any viewer to the buildings. The layout of the Jelokhan is made so that the hospitality of the owner of the house (or even public buildings) is conveyed to the viewer.

In the local architecture of Iran, buildings with residential and public functions were built on the basis of two very important factors - the ecology and culture of the peoples of any city. Due to this, structures with different functions, at the same time have differences in characteristics, but also general similarities, which were formed under the influence of culture, social and economic conditions and beliefs of people. All structures in Iran were built in accordance with the general rules mentioned above, and furthermore, one of the important features of Iran's past architecture was the creation of a social connection between the internal and external spaces. A factor that is commonly seen in houses with traditional textures in cities and villages is the observance of the hijab and respect for the members of the house, on the basis of which the interior and exterior spaces of the structure were built. Jelokhan is one of the elements of architecture and urban planning that served the above goals. It is at the same time a public and private space. It is both a place for passers-by and a place for a short rest. Thus, these contradictory features of the various spaces make the traditional Iranian architecture more attractive and interesting. These features add value to the intermediate spaces in traditional Iranian architecture.

Jelokhan basically has a semicircular, rectangular, semi-oval layout in the form of the Latin letter U or horseshoe shape. These geometric shapes have been envisioned for the purpose of creating an atmosphere that invites into the home. So that at first glance, such a feeling is transmitted to any viewer. In proportion, the width is generally greater than the depth. Such geometric proportions are carried out especially in houses that belong to the wealthy or well-known categories of society.

Jelokhan is classified into three groups based on their proportions and general distinguishing characteristics.

The first group is the simplest spaces in terms of appearance and decorative elements. Basically, such spaces are not large and consist of the following parts: Arch, door and tympanum (which is decorated with decorative patterns), benches (pyrneshin) (Fig. 3).

The second group, compared with the first group, occupy a large space and play a significant role in front of the entrance to the house and the exit from the house.



**Fig. 3.** Entrance door of a house in Dezful with simple brick decorations

The large arch attracts the attention of any viewer. The entrance door is higher and the tympanum is decorated with richer brick, stone and plaster patterns. The benches have ample seating space. Usually the jelokhan was provided with such characteristics in front of public buildings as a mosque, a caravanserai, a bathhouse, a school, etc. (Fig. 4). The third group - Jelokhan usually occupies a significant space and sometimes it is in the form of a platform in front of the front door. The arch is high-rise and even very noticeable. The door also has a special effect with the tympanum, decorated with special decorative patterns.

The benches have plenty of space and a variety of geometric shapes. This group belongs to special categories (famous, rich) of society. For example, the largest residential building in the world, which is located in the city of Kerman (located in the southeastern part of Iran). In honor of the owner, it was named "Haj Ali Residential House" (Fig. 5). One of the special characteristics of this pulp is the formation of harmony between external and internal spaces. The common space is very proportional, attractive and rich in its architectural characteristics.



**Fig. 4.** Entrance door of Suzangar house with rich brick decorations (in the city of Dezful)



**Fig. 5.** Entrance door of Haj Ali house with very rich decorations (in the city of Kerman)

## Conclusion

All the elements that make up the general set of the entrance to the house, with their architectural, artistic and constructive characteristics, form special conditions with the help of which the construction clearly distinguishes residential buildings from each other.

Based on the information studied, it is proposed to use more of the above mentioned architectural elements and spaces to bring the concept and deep understanding into architecture.

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