



## ANDARUN

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**ANDARŪN**, or ANDARŪNĪ (inside), the private quarters of well-to-do houses in contrast to *bīrūnī*. the public rooms usually reserved for men.

Until quite recently, Persian houses of the affluent, landowners, and wealthy merchants were run as two separate spheres of *andarūnī* and *bīrūnī*. The *andarūn* was the preserve of female members of the family: mother, wife or wives, nurses, nannies, other female servants, and children of both sexes until the age of puberty, at which time the male children were separated from the female and sent to the *bīrūnī*. Strong, high walls presented an outside face to private residences, but through a door leading into a narrow passageway (*dālān*) one emerged into one of several large courtyards, planted with fruit trees, shrubs, and flowers, and often containing pools and fountains. The entrance to the *andarūn* was sometimes indicated by no more than a thick canvas curtain, although in the houses of the truly affluent, eunuchs were posted as guards.

The *andarūn* consisted of a complex of rooms which served for entertainment, sleeping, and carrying out of daily household chores. It was here that the kitchen, pantry, and storage rooms were located. In contrast to the austerity characteristic of the *bīrūnī*, the larger rooms were usually richly furnished with carpets, silk-covered cushions, and interior decoration. On occasions such as births, weddings, circumcisions, funerals, and return from pilgrimages, female visitors were entertained in the *andarūn*, where upon entering, they doffed their veils (*rūbandas*) and sturdy shoes for silk and brocade dresses and soft, comfortable slippers. Performances were given by musicians and



dancers, usually female (but sometimes young Jewish boys). Men, other than immediate relatives, were not allowed into the *andarūn*, and even physicians would be required to treat an ailing female member from behind a curtain, seeing only the tongue of the mostly-hidden patient. For sending messages to the male quarters, young boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen, called *golām bačča* in great houses and *kāna-šāgerd* in lesser ones, were hired, sometimes working under the supervision of the eunuch. Once the boys reached adulthood, they were dismissed or else taken on as full-time servants in a different capacity.

Some wealthy men were able to provide separate *andarūn* for each of their wives, but this was unusual, and intrigues among wives or temporary wives (*šīgas*), often directed against the husband, were common. In places the *andarūn* was more often called *ḥaram* or *ḥaram-sarā* (*šabestān*, or *moškū* in the *Šāh-nāma*).

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See also Solṭān-Aḥmad Mīrzā 'Azod-al-dawla, *Tārīk-e 'Azodī*, ed. 'A. Navā'ī, Tehran, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 12-49 for an account of the lives of Faḥ-'Alī Shah's wives.