

CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL STUDY OF MOTIFS

After the description and classification of motifs, their compositions and their employment, it is proposed now to study them on a boarder prespective. This study is undertaken on the basis of basic motifs, such as Triangles, Squares, Circles in Geometric Motifs and Petalzs, Leaves and Creepers in Floral Motif. Each of this will be studied further in details of their employment sizes, variation in basic forms and final composition of their own and along with other motifs in composite patterns. For this purpose the basic forms are transformed either in size or outline. In addition to this, while making compositions of two motifs, their size and forms are also changed to produce a beautiful decoration. All the decorations are on pieces of Square Slabs.

From the study of all the decorations following aspects are clear : (1) almost all decorations are in square boxes. Except in a few instances of vertical rectangles as in Muluk Khānas. It may be noted that the rectangular decorations are employed on the screen of Muluk-Khāna of all the big mosques, where the Muluk-Khāna exists. (2) Each box is defined by a 10 to 13 cm. broad boarder which is generally kept plain. Only in few instances like Jami Mosque at Chāmpāner, Shaikh Farīdīz Tomb at Pātan, Jami Mosque at Cambay, Hilālkhān Mosque at Dholka and few known mosques at Ahmedābād. They are worked with almost short horizontal wavy lines and dentals in relief. (3) Usually a small floral motif is used on the corners of the

chaquer of the window. (4) The design decoration is produced by carving out the stone slabs and keeping only the motif which looks bold and prominent. (5) For the better understanding of the subject the present study is based on following basic motifs :

(A) GEOMETRIC MOTIFS

(1) Bands (2) Triangles (3) Squares (4) Loops (5) Circles
(6) Hexagons (7) Octagons (8) Swastika.

(B) FLORAL MOTIFS

(1) Flowers (2) Creepers (3) Trees (4) Interlaced
Floral Patterns.

(C) SYMMETRIC FLORAL DESIGNS

(D) ARMS AND WEAPONS

(E) MISCELLANEOUS FORMS

(F) DECORATIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENTS

GEOMETRIC MOTIFS(1) Bands :

Band is a basic element for borders of motifs of geometry; or such as squares, rectangles or hexagons and octagons etc. The difference lies in their use or rather arrangements of that particular motif. Thus the bands are used as border for all these motifs as carved within square. (Fig. 68 , ~~Fig.~~ , Fig. 69 , Fig. 70 , Fig. 71 , Fig. 72). Some times the pairs of parallel bands are also used in a cross (Fig. 71 , Fig. 72 , Fig. 73 , Fig. 74 , Fig. 75) some times broad bands in cross forms are used to divide the box in four quadrangles (Fig. 80 , Fig. 82 , Fig. 83).

(2) Triangles :

Triangle as a basic motif is not so much common as other geometric motifs like square and circle. This is probably because their combination permits limited scope for its combination with other motifs. In this, decoration with triangles are basically used in various arrangements; in horizontal and vertical rows with variations in the junction of their points. From the observation, its clear that all the triangles are :-

- (a) Right Angled Triangles
- (b) Isosceles Triangles
- (c) The Broader base opposing the right angles are always put together to produce triangle motifs and generally with equal sides.

Only in the case of (Fig. 137) no right angles triangles are used, but in that place they are Isosceles Triangles arranged with their apex meeting.

The basic pattern produced by triangle is chequer pattern, with each chequer diagonally divided into positive and negative triangles. The size of the triangle varies according to the design to be provided like bigger chequer motifs as in case of (Fig. 130), and (Fig. 131). In some cases, as in (Fig. 129) as much as thirtysix square compartments are produced while in (Fig. 130 and Fig. 131) only four squares are used.

In (Fig. 134) a typical composite decoration is produced with a quarterfoil decoration in the centre and in (Fig. 135) quarter foil decoration are put in square compartments, besides the triangles. (Fig. 136) is a composite decoration with a vertical square having the apex points of triangles attached at the centres of its sides. In (Fig. 137) a typical octagonal basic shape

is produced by an intricate arrangement of right angle triangles at the corners of the square; further this octagon is decorated with pairs of triangles along its sides in such a way that another octagon is produced within the bigger octagon; with a big square in centre having a quarterfoil decoration.

A unique example of rounded angles and depressed sides is visible in the case of (Fig. 139) here such type of triangles are imposed one above the other with their rounded angles over imposed on each others sides.

(Fig. 140) is a variant of above example, produced by a running stem of a upside down three petal lotus which is placed in the centre of the decoration.

(3) Squares :

As already discussed square is the basic motif of the decoration of all the jali's screens. But square as a decorative motif is used in various ways such as a single square in chequer pattern. (Fig. 51 , Fig. 52) and as super imposed square as in (Fig. 57). The chequer pattern is in various sizes and sometimes employed with a flower in centre like (Fig. 52) and (Fig. 54). Chess board pattern is also used in (Fig. 141 , Fig. 142 and Fig.). In (Fig. 142), a floral decoration is put in its centre.

Square with a floral motifs such as flower pattern and leaves are also used. As the curvilinear flower pattern make good composition with straight line of square, the device of composition is very common.

Square with a flower pattern in quarter foil form are popular in many varieties. Such as central flower with big petal (Fig. 92 , Fig. 78 and Fig. 102), smaller flower in a smaller square within a square are encountered in (Fig. 97 and Fig. 100). Eight petal flower in central square and vertical square is in (Fig. 99 , Fig. 103 , Fig. 120) etc.

This flower petal with pointed ends are in (Fig. 100 , Fig. 101 , Fig. 111 and Fig. 114).

Rounded petals in a negative device are in (Fig. 106 , Fig. 110).

(4) Circles :

Circle is one of the most popular motif in Jali decoration. This is because the curved outline of the circle produces a very good contrast with the square background of the Jali. This circle almost always touches the sides of the square. The circular band making the circles are broad band of about 3 cm. to 2 cm. in width. A negative circles encounter in (Fig. 212 , Fig. 214 and Fig. 202).

The corners of the square whenever filled, are with either squares, bars, pointed petals, floral corners etc.

The composite designs are produced by flower motifs varying in numbers of petals from four to eight in numbers. And in one case sixteen in number (Fig. 224) (Fig. 185) is a unique decoration of three over impose triangles within a circle. In (Fig. 184) a vertical cross is used in the circle.

The flower decorations along with circles are of ~~three~~^{four} types :

- a - Lotus petals
- b - Pointed Petals
- c - Rounded Petals
- d - Hooked ended leaves, arranged in a flower petal.

The lotus petals are short (Fig. 219, Fig. 220) as well as long (Fig. 223). The lotus petals in (Fig. 219 and Fig. 220) are arranged in a circular formation looking like a corolla.

The pointed petals flowers are most common with four, six, or eight petals; forming a big flower covering almost the whole circle. In one instance (Fig. 194), a composite decoration is produced by three petals; four petals with their central tips meeting at the centre of the circles. Flower within a hexagon is presented in

(Fig. 243 , Fig. 189) where a cross is over imposed on a quarterfoil decoration.

The rounded tips flower are generally produced by intricate carving within a circle. They are six to eight petals decorations with their rounded types pointing out in (Fig. 215). The tips are almost completely circular but in negative. This is again repeated in positive in (Fig. 216) and with a central flower in (Fig. 217).

The mango shaped leaf on petal motif is also used to produce flower motif. Within circle in which three to eight petals are used. As already noticed above the tips of the leaf are hooked and rounded. Generally there is a hole in the centre. In (Fig. 209), three petals are used to form a lotus like decoration. In some cases even stems are depicted emerging from the lower base part of the circle. A negative presentation of such a motif is encounter in (Fig. 212).

Arcs of circle are also used as decorative motifs to produce to various designs. They constitute of concentric arcs, two, three or four in number or single arcs. Generally these arcs are quarter of a circle in various sizes. Mostly in concentric arcs they are placed in the corners of the square as in (Fig. 226 , Fig. 227

Fig. 228). In addition to this, half circles are used attached on the sides of the square as in (Fig. 229, Fig 230) Flowers are also employed with them. In (Fig. 231, Fig. 232) corners are produced by vertical square with depressed sides with a quarterfoil flower in the centre and tri-foil flower in the corner. A negative representation of this is encounter in (Fig. 232). Quarter circle with triangle at corners of square are used in (Fig. 234) to produce a composite design of quarterfoil flower in the centre; and triangles attached at the tips of central flower. Similarly by secting arcs on the circle produce a geometric design as in (Fig. 235 , Fig. 236.).

Arcs as a series in square formation is used in (Fig. 237 and Fig. 240 , Fig.) is a negative variant of this.

(5) Hexagons :

Unlike the another grills which are square, hexagon is used in rectangular box on Mulak-khānas. But in very rare cases hexagon is also used as a motif of decoration. In (Fig. 241), it is produced by broad band and with a star in the centre. The central space is filled with a cross.

(6) Octagon :

Octagon as a basic motif is used in various ways, but

generally it is covering almost the square box. In few instances i.e. (Fig. 251 , Fig. 252) smaller octagons are used. They are combined with multiangled stars and flowers. In (Fig. 245 and Fig. 246) multiangled stars are used in such a way that their pointed tips touch the corners of the octagon. This is done with the help of triangles standing on the eight sides of their apex meeting on the central square. Considering octagons are used in (Fig. 250), these are further strengthened by bars joining their angles. In (Fig. 251) octagon with a quarterfoil within a circle. Multiple design of octagon in the centre and five sides of hexagon overlapping each other is employed in (Fig. 254). Circle with rounded end cross within it is put within a hexagon (Fig. 249).

(7) Swastika :

Swastika is used to form an angular geometric pattern. As such it is used in two formations, out of which one is right handed and the other left handed. Moreover, the running bars forming them emerge from the sides of the squares.

FLORAL

The Floral motifs in this decoration are basically.

(1) Flower, (2) Creepers, (3) Trees, (4) Interlaced Floral Pattern.

(1) Flower :

As usually known, flowers are depicted in their front pose with fully stretched petals. As such the differences in various uses of flower lies in the shape of their petals and their numbers.

Basically four types of petals are used :

- A - long pointed end petals in lenticular shape.
- B - lotus petals with pointed tips, but broad base.
- C - rounded petals.
- D - traditional mango shaped petals; probably of stylized leaf - pattern.

The lenticular petals are almost common. They are in group of four, six, eight and sixteen, and are combined with circle as noted above and even hexagon and squares.

In some cases the pointed tips are extended and in other they are short.

Generally, their pointed tips touch the sides of the square or the circle or hexagon as the case may be.

Similar the lotus patterns are employed to produce a bold lotus like flower, as seen from front. The lotus petals are generally eight in number. In one case a composite design is produced (Fig. 223).

The rounded tip flowers are generally in geometric form of four to eight petals. In some cases there are over imposed flowers also as in (Fig. 228 , Fig. 289). Flowers are sometimes having small squares on the corners of their boxes, (Fig. 285 and Fig. 285A) and sometimes arcs as in (Fig. 286). In one case a four petals flower is put. e.g. (Fig. 294).

Within a stepped square and in one case a rounded ended four petals flower is over imposed on a depressed side square (Fig. 293).

A very small four petal flower is used in a sunken over rectangle (Fig. 295). Flower with a long stem arrange in a circular formations are also found. But this flower is composed of generally three mango shaped petals. But only in one case in (Fig. 297) there are five petals.

(2 and 3) Creepers and Trees :

Creepers and trees are very popular on the square boxes of the Jali of the windows. Generally these creepers have stems emerging from the base of the square or rectangle. But emerging from sides and corners are also encountered. The stems are thick at

the base and as they proceed further, they twist and turn with their branches and offshoots. The offshoots are ending in mango-shaped leaves arranged in artistic curved form. The tendrils have rounded tipped end. Sometimes (Fig. 347) a creeper is spread in more than one boxes (Fig. 348).

Some times very thick and bold stems are used (Fig. 321). In contrast to this very fine thin lined examples of circular formation are encountered in (Fig. 309) and geometric formation of entwined creepers are also encountered (Fig. 380 , Fig. 381 and Fig. 382). In entricate design of this nature is encountered in (Fig. 383 , Fig. 384 , Fig. 385). In these cases the rectangular boxes can be divided into exact vertical halves of exact counter-pair.

Cypress trees are encountered in a rectangular box with their trunks and branching of leaves in tradition forms. These trees are generally depicted within an egg-shaped geometric form and accompanied by flowers, or circle in the corners.

SĪDĪ SAYYĪD SCREEN

The world famous Sīdī Sayyīd window screen is carved within an arch. There are two trees, one of them is the straight vertical tree, which seems to be a palm-like tree with nine branches sprouting out of the trunk. Above this, is a small section of geometric decoration band. The tree which is the main base motif of the screen is having a thick too trunk which rises in a tapering form, branching in twisting and turning branches entwined with one another and covering the whole arc. Each branch is having its own offshoots, in accordance with the turn or twist of the branch.

(4) Interlaced Floral Pattern

(A) - This group include the designs which are composed by running bands of loops of undulating formations. The basic form is loop in various formations of almost shape half circle and interlaced knotting rops. They are arranged in geometric designs within square boxes. Sometimes leaves are added at the end of each running loops, in such a way to place the leaves on the sides of the squares.

In (Fig. 162 and Fig. 163) crossing is also combined along with loops.

(B) - Interlaced rounded ends cross and heart shaped decorations are encountered in (Fig. 166 and Fig. 167). A negative but finer variant of this decorations in a rectangular box is presented in (Fig. 168).

One design is of a central square with rounded loops attached at its corners and over imposed by a motif of cross with closed ends.

A variant of this without cross but instead of a quarterfoil flower in the centre is present in (Fig. 165).

Symmetric Floral Motifs

The symmetric decorations of floral motifs are confined mostly within rectangular boxes. They are nothing but symmetric representational floral motifs like flowers, creepers, and trees in a symmetric planning. As such their basic characteristic is uniformity of two halves divided vertically. Generally a tree or creeper is presented emerging from the base of the box with stem or trunk going up and branches, stems etc. arranged in a symmetric

alignment. For this purpose floral forms of branches, stems, flowers and leaves are slightly stylized in geometric forms. But the beauty of symmetric decorations are not only in their basic element but in arrangement of these motifs also.

DECORATIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENTS

The decorative motifs described above are employed on various other architectural components also. But as their treatment, employment, combinations and ultimate decorative scheme differ from the jali window's decorations described above, their descriptions are given below as a separate topic.

Minars :

The scheme for decorating the minars is as follows :
The lowest portion from the ground level up to half of the main arch of the entrance is decorated in the style of mandovar of temples. But without human or animal motifs. This is highly decorated with horizontal bands of padampatra, Karnika, kalashā, pattika, jadambha etc. The nich of the temple are here transformed into niches with floral decorations of creepers, trees etc. The upper part of minars are decorated with horizontal band space at regular interval and in uniform pattern on each storey.

Pillars :

Pillars are scantily decorated. Their main decorations are on brackets and the base. This is to keep the attention of the devotees towards mehrams which are highly decorated.

Brackets :

Brackets are in very few mosques, decorated with motifs. But they are marked by roll moulded projections under the architraves.

Architraves :

The architraves are decorated on the under side and flanks. Generally the undersides are decorated with a full bloomed flower in big circle with petals arranged in concentric circles. The flanks are very seldom decorated. Only in few mosques they are decorated with horizontal bands of flower petals and undulating creepers.

Ceiling :

Ceilings are given special technical attention. The flat ceilings are decorated with floral pattern in various leaves sunk into the ceiling, while the domed ceilings are decorated with circular band

corbled one above the other and reaching of the centre of the ceiling. The decorative scheme is basically circular band of cusped (गजतानु) patterns in many variety like Padamnabhā (पद्मनाभ) And classified according to Vastu test, the centre is mostly decorated with a suspended chandelier which is known as Padamkeśar Ceiling.

Mehrābs :

Mehrābs are given special attention hence they are the most decorated part of the mosque. Their decorative scheme is almost same as Hindu temples door frame of the sanctum. The door frame arc and the interior nich are decorated with floral as well as geometric motifs running along the rectangular frame and surmounting arches.

Balconies :

Like the mehrāb, balconies are also highly decorated but their decorations are confined to the reclining flanks use as seats rest (कदासन). They are decorated with diamond, leaves and flower petals in horizontal bands.

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