

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The evidences of the cultural heritage of Gujarāt found right upto Harappan period i.e. 2350 B.C. After this there is a wide gap of about three thousand years. Then there is almost an uninterrupted History of cultural tradition in art and architecture. The real structural monuments of Gujarāt began from Maitraka period (circa 6th to 8th Cent. A.D.) in Saurashtra. But with the beginning of the Chaulukya dynasty in Gujarāt a new apoch of architectural activity commenced. The kings like Mulraja, Siddharaja, Kumarpal etc. had patronized literature as well as art, architecture and built many temples, lakes etc. Particularly the construction technique and carving skill and artistic sense developed to perfection as at Modhera, Siddhapur, Abu etc. The Sompura Brahmins who were the main architects and sculptors of Chaulukyan, and their assistants had retained and even sharpened these crafts skills in artistic sense to such a perfection that Gujarāt could claim a/separate school of architecture and sculpture. Therefore, when the Muslim power in Gujarāt was established and became stable, it demanded the builders and carvers of Gujarāt to erect and decorate the mosques and mesoleum which form the main Muslim architecture. Gujarāt artizens, architects and sculptors readily extended their skill for this endeavour which resulted in typical style of mosque architecture with

characteristic decorations. No doubt the basic elements from Hindu and Jain temple architecture and their decorations were adopted but their transformation to suit the ideology of Islam was inevitable. This is why as already started in the introduction of the Thesis, this subject was taken up for a Ph. D. thesis. Therefore, after the presentation of the data, its classification and ultimate interpretation, it will now be interesting to draw some conclusions.

Unlike the most of the mosques in different regions in India, the mosques of Gujarāt are very artistically decorated with stone carving. These carved decorations are planned on a pre-concieved scheme of light and shades in accordance with balance of its forms and designs.

Basically the decorations are spread on all parts of mosques. But emphasis is given to important parts, such as minars, mehrābs, windows, balconies and screens. The parts like pillars, brackets, architraves, walls and arches of entrances are also decorated but sparsely in comparison to the above mentioned parts.

The decorative motifs can be broadly divided into following groups :

1. Geometric Motifs
2. Floral Motifs

3. Symmetric Floral Motifs
4. Arms and Weapons Motif
5. Miscellaneous Motif.

These motifs are employed in a well-defined order of their arrangement in various combinations so as to produce a typical pattern of decorative design.

Under geometric decorations there are Bands, Triangles, Squares, Loops, Circles, Hexagons, Octagons, and Swastika. Out of these the bands, triangles and circles are found over the major part of decoration. This is because they provide the basic form in vision and hence their compositions can be planned in quite big varieties. The straight bands are used horizontally to demarcate. The horizontal band borders and its employment with vertical band produces square or rectangle boxes and vertical registers.

Triangle is a basic motif used in an outline form or a block, either vertical or inverted. The combination of these two in alternate adjoinment has produced various patterns of hexagons, squares, rectangles and lattice screen also. Thus potentialities of this geometric motif is used in a most intelligent way to produce scores of patterns, which produce illusions of many compositions if looked from different angles and on base of various basic compositions.

This motif is further used with rounded corner and overlapped one above the other to produce a composite and continuous loop like pattern. Sometimes flowers are added in the centre or corners to enhance the beauty of the compositions as a whole. The use of flowers with triangles is a good example of constructing the straight-sided motif like a triangle with a curved-lined motif flower. Due to this arrangement both the motifs are visible individually as well as a composition.

Square is a basic box for almost all the decorative motifs. In fact square presents a straight side basic motif which limits the motif confined within it and produces some effect of harmony or contrast in relation to the form of the other motif. As such it is used diagonally with its four corners touching the four sides of the square box and in ordinary course. The diagonal form is combined with four petalled flower either independent or within another square. Series of squares arranged in grid pattern produces chequer pattern with many small squares within a big square. Sometimes bands of squares produce border of a bigger square vertical or diagonal crosses are also employed to produce such bands.

In rare cases leaves with stems emerging from the sides or the corners of the squares are also encountered. In such

cases squares are used as a confined space within which floral motifs of petals or creepers are arranged. Here the square is used only as a limitation of field.

The square motif is further modified by rounding their corners and sides depressed at centre. These modified motif is imposed one above the other produce a composite interlaced loop like pattern. Flowers are added in the centre of single such squares and also at their corners to enhance the beauty of the composition and produce a variation in monotony of carved outlines.

Thus a square is mostly employed diagonally along with a flower within it; whenever other squares is put within it, it is invariably a smaller diagonal square with its four corners touching centres of the sides of the main square.

Groups of square arranged in chequer pattern produce alternate blank and solid squares. They are in various sizes according to the plan of the decoration as a whole.

In addition to these, squares are used with circle within or without. But circles are combined with diagonal squares only. This is probably because the circle produces an effect of rolling movement while ordinary square with side as base produces stability and immobility.

Thus square is used as box, as well as basic limitation of other motifs. When used with flowers or circles which have curved outlines it produces a pleasing contrast.

Circle is one of the most employed basic motif. It is used as a single unit or in combination of two or more in various orders. As a single unit it is a limitation of the motif displayed within it and on groups they produce various decorations such as series, intersecting, concentric and overlapping.

As noted above as a single unit it is used as an inclosure for flower in geometric or stylized form. In addition to this sometimes wedge-shaped decorations are added at four corners of the enclosing box. In rare cases additional crosses, either vertical or diagonal are added. In a few cases squares are also enclosed within them. Thus circle combination with flowers produce a harmonious decoration and in combination with straightlined motif like cross, square or triangle produces a contrusly decoration.

Triangles within circle is a new combination, where in triangles are mostly used as single or in groups of overlapping triangles either vertical or horizontal. But these triangles are almost invariably isoscelaes triangles.

Arcs are generally employed in concentric groups emerging from four corners of the square or rectangular boxes. They

are produced by thin or thick outline emphasizing their forms as whole.

From the above description it will be evident that the decorations had recognized potentialities of circle motif which is in itself is also a beautiful motif. But their ingenuity lies in combinations of floral and geometric motifs like flowers, leaves, and squares and triangles. Use of flowers within circle is confined to symmetric four or multipetalled flowers in symmetric geometric forms.

Hexagons are never used as single basic motif but always combined with other motifs like stars, flowers, and crosses. Mostly they are employed in composite designs producing symmetric formations of positive and negative effects. The stars are always within a hexagon block, with flower, within circle or without it. Hexagon within a circle is rarely used. Sometimes multiple symmetric patterns are produced by double line hexagon with cross within them. This device produce a finer composition of intricate lines broken at corners.

Like Hexagons, Octagons are also never used as basic motif but are always used in combination with other motifs like flowers, cross and stars. They are mostly employed in composite designs producing symmetric formations of positive and negative effects. They are always filled with flowers having star in it or with a circle having a star. Multiple

symmetric patterns are produced by double line octagon with cross within it. Thus octagon is employed with floral and geometric motif combination either in double or single line out line.

Swastika is used as a basic motif to produce a symmetric design with a continues line.

From the above description it will be evident that basic geometric motifs are never used as isolated unit but is always combined with other motifs. Of geometric or floral origin. This is because they themselves present a symmetric form of straight or curved lines. Due to this reason they provided only limited scope for combinations in form resulting balance. Their compositions in forms, designs and ultimate production of decorative scheme as a whole are also limited. They are combined mainly with flowers having various types of petals and general form. Hence as such they provide a good background for floral motifs which are mostly based on curved lines. Even though the floral motifs of mosques are limited in number, have quite a wide range of variations in their forms, combinations with other motifs and with their ultimate compositions in various designs.

Basically they can be divided into four categories,

1. Flowers
2. Leaves

3. Creepers

4. Trees.

Flower is most common universal motif, used in various forms. Their forms are based on the arrangement of their petals. Basically there are two forms (1) corolla type, full-bloomed flower with their petals extended in full bloom. (2) In profile showing stem, base and petals. This form is shown in lotus flowers only because, the basic concept of lotus is profile. Its geometric form of various petals is also known. But this is displayed on the flat surface of architraves etc.

Flowers are employed within a circle or a square as a single motif or in group of two or more. But they can be classified mainly on the basis of the forms of their petals. These petals are either thin with pointed ends or thick with pointed or rounded ends. In addition to this, number of petals also differ from four to sixteen. But whatever may be the number of flowers used, but are always depicted in front pose in a symmetric geometric form; marked with exact geometric perfection with a compass. This was essential because of the nature of its field of display which was flat surface within a square, rectangle or circular box. Maintenance of symmetry was also essential because each unit was within a limited space.

Sometimes four petalled flowers in small size are put in four smaller squares in grid pattern within a square in four compartments.

Over imposed dimishing sized flowers are also found in few instances in this type.

All these flowers are used in decoration on various parts of mosques such as jalis, windows, lintels, door-frames, balconies, walls, ceilings and architraves. But their sizes, number of petals and shape of petals differ from place to place according to the surface on which they are displayed.

The most evolved form of flower is the Padmake'sar (chandelier) suspended from the centre of the coibelled ceiling under the dome where multiple concentric circles of flower petals are arranged in a perfect geometric design. These circular bands are of long petal forms of various width and tips.

Flowers in bands are common in walls where they are generally in a uniform style in boxes arranged in a string course.

The lotus flower is used in two forms with full-bloomed form displayed in front pose and bud like form in profile.

The full bloomed form is having one or two series of

petals in concentric circles. Here the petals are broader at base and pointed at tips and sometimes having an incised line along its length.

The profile form is generally having three bud forms perched at the top of vertical stem. But these buds are having rounded ends indicating a mango-like form.

The three bud flower like motifs in a group of four, in a square is an artistic symmetric composition. In this case the flowers are shown emerging from four corners with their tips meeting at the centre of the square, this forming a geometric motif.

The mango-like ( आम्रमंजरी ) form is a common motif used on stems of creepers with three to five or even more in number. The stem is never a straight one but in twists and turns or atleast having some bend in it. This motif forms a very artistic harmonious decoration, based on twists and turn. This device is used quite profusely in trees where instead of branches having such floral motifs are arranged in an artistic formation in harmony with the plan of the decoration scheme as a whole.

Flowers in vertical series on a straight vertical stem are also used to cover the whole square. Thus it produces a geometric decoration composed by floral motif.

Leaves are never used as an independent motif. They are

always attached to stems of creepers, branches of the trees, and in very few instances on geometric forms. They are shaped into stylized mango like form ( आम मंजरी ) with the ends slightly bent and marked with a rounded. They differ in sizes according to their position on the tree or creeper, when they are attached. Near the base they are bigger and become smaller and smaller as the stem becomes thinner and thinner towards its end of the tree or creepers as the case may be. Sometimes they are arranged in a symmetric design branching off from the central trunk as in the cypress tree. Their most artistic use is in undulating creepers and spiralling creepers; wherein they are arranged in a perfect balance of symmetry and weight according to the twist and turn; of the creeper. In addition to this; leaves are arranged in symmetric design produced by combination of geometric and floral motifs. Thus leaves are used as secondary motif to enhance the natural beauty of the tree, creeper or plant. Along with geometric motif they are used only in symmetric designs.

Creepers are displayed generally within square or rectangular boxes in their natural irregular formation of undulating twists and turns but in roughly spiralling pattern. In some cases only short twists and turns are used. The bigger and finer creepers have more spirals, twists, turns, and finer stems.



Trees are always employed as a single decorative motif, displayed within a square or rectangular box. Sometimes more than one compartment of boxes are carved with a single tree. The best example of such trees are at Sīdī Saiyed Mosque at Ahmedabad.

Trees are displayed in two styles or forms :

- (1) Stylized Creeper-like form,
- (2) Cypress tree.

The creeper like form is having thick slightly twisting trunk resting on the base of the square. Its branches are also shown in similar fashion of twists and turns ending in bold leaves or rounded tendrils.

In some cases a single tree spread in more than one adjoining square boxes is also encountered. The thick base of its trunk is resting in the bottom of the square and trunk shooting up with branches spread in upper adjoining squares. But these branches are shown in almost creeper like form. Similarly a pair of intertwined trees are displayed in a horizontal band in three adjoining square boxes. The biggest and best presentation of twisting and turning creeper is presented in Kalpalata pattern in the main ceiling just above the central Mehrāb at Chāmpāner's Jami Mosque. The decoration seems to have been derived from original Gandhar, and

decoration on a medallion from Devanimori.<sup>1</sup> This tradition continued on Gupta and Post-Gupta temples, which subsequently reached Solanki temples also; from which this evolved form is adopted.

But the most common form is single tree within a square or rectangular box. Such trees are also in stylized but artistic form displaying all trails of the basic form of a tree. As such the base is always on the base of the square with trunk rising up in slight twists with branches spread in the whole square. Each branch has leaves attached to its sides and rounded tendrils and shoots at the end.

Cypress trees are displayed within a leaf-shaped filled confined within vertical rectangular box. The slender trunk of the tree resting on the base of the rectangle rises up in very slightly curved form. This slight curve indicates high sense of artistic genius of carver, because a straight trunk will look unnatural and harsh. The stylized branches and leaves are arranged almost in a symmetric formation. Thus on the whole cypress trees presented a symmetric decoration. The cypress tree decoration is one of the best decoration displaying artistic display of a floral motif in almost a geometric form with balance and harmony of symmetry.

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1. Dr. Mehta R.N. Dr. Chowdhry S.N. - Excavation at Devanimori, plat - LVI, A.

The symmetric decorations are nothing but compositions of floral and geometric motifs like stems, leaves, and tendrils arranged in a symmetric geometric formation or design within a square. Hence as such each design can be divided into two vertical halves. Exactly symmetric and similar to one another.

To produce such symmetry stylization of floral motif goes to the extent of making them almost geometric. Each leaf or tendril is symmetric in its basic form.

Arms and weapons motifs are seldom used in decoration, but these are depicted in a symmetric composition. The dagger like weapon called "Katar" is a weapon composed of long triangular blade and two pronged hilt. These are displayed in a pair within a square, with their blades pointing down and hilts pointing up.

One decoration of pointed base pot and vajralike weapon in cross formation is seems to be a coat of arms or atleast due to its symmetric form it looks like that.

Similarly another motif of a three pronged trishul-like weapon with double covering staff in a inverted position over an arch is also depicted on a rectangular jali. This decoration also seems like a coat of arms.

From a close scrutiny of preceding discussion some basic

traits of use of basic motifs, their forms, their employment and compositions can easily be marked, which can be put in a nutshell as follows.

At Chāmpāner, Broach and Ahmedābād the mosques and buildings constructed during that period are found richly decorated with carving, stucco, applied mosaic and wood carving, which is not available in recent period.

The Hindu architectural decorations adopted and transformed to suit the architectural components; of mosques are only geometric and floral. Their use as independent and in combination is well planned in a typical patterns of harmony as well as contrast which enhances the grace of the decoration and grandeur of the mosque as a whole.

In geometrical designs, the traditional patterns of square is used repeatedly but the richer varieties of triangles, circles and arabesques patterns seem to be developed partly from the Persian inspiration and partly from converted motifs.

All this things indicate a strong tradition of decorative element that existed in the region which was effectively used during these centuries. While making use of it many new elements were adopted to suit the needs of different groups living at that time.

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