Chapter 4

The concept of Floral Motifs in Indian Islamic Paintings
CHAPTER – IV

THE CONCEPT OF FLORAL MOTIFS IN INDIAN ISLAMIC PAINTINGS

Flower are natural and divine source of decoration in the universe. They denote soft and innocent expressions. Muslim artists have used this Islamic aesthetic symbol in abstract form and made their art interesting and beautiful. Their products impress the viewers with their peaceful expression.

A. Floral Motifs

Floral motifs were part of ornamental art and were used as common designs in ancient art. They were used in Architectural ornamentation, and decoration of houses and public places. Floral and vegetation motifs were considered suitable for anticonic expression, repetitive patterns and for filling space. Plant motifs were either borrowed from earlier oriental designs or were imitations of local floral designs.¹

Floral motifs actually belong to flower’s family. They include presentation of flowers in their abstract form as well as to make artistic design or ornamental setting of flowers. These motifs are repeated to make patterns more decorative and appealing. Artists use their imagination to make diverse patterns in various shapes from floral motifs. Sometimes these patterns appear to be imaginary or far from reality but still they are liked because of their elegance. They receive admiration and attention because of their beautiful form which look real and impressive.
Indian Islamic Paintings are full of fragrance of decorative elements. This decoration may either form the theme or subject matter of a painting or depict some other description. But in both cases it remains dominant and beautiful. The muslim artists were faithful followers of Islamic culture and maintained the underlying spirit of Islam at every stage. In other words they used Islamic painting to reflect the beauty and splendour of their culture and used symbolic forms and elements with perfect aesthetic sense.

**B. Floral Patterns with Scrolling and Repeated Forms**

The history of Indian Muslim painting has undergone rapid and clearly defined changes with advance of time. It started with following of Iranian traditions and adopted numerous additions and alterations. From Persian courts this art reached India and under different dynasties, it developed into an important Islamic art. 'Floral patterns, geometric designs and calligraphy gave beauty novelty, strength and popularity to these paintings. With the help of these elements Muslim artists evolved many combinations by using a number of materials and produced excellent decoration items such as illuminated manuscripts of the Quran, polychrome ceramic tiles, exterior and interior surfaces of religious buildings, gardens, palaces and residential houses. Different types of background and glimpses of local customs and event added to the beauty and popularity of these paintings.

'Floral motifs were used for illuminating manuscripts of holy Quran in ninth century in Muslims world. It was quite common to decorate the sacred book with external beauty and beautiful designs. Such books were very much
in demand because of holy text its meaningful teachings and attractive decorations.

'The ornamentation of title and decoration of pages of manuscripts and tooks, royal decrees and epithets written in Persian were, also quite popular. The artists and calligraphers produced excellent decorations and developed novel ideas and imagination. In Muslim period such experiments were successfully made and liberally patronized by the kings and feudal lords. This led to abundant supplies of arabesques and palmettors with repeated and innovative forms and designs.'

'Floral patterns were based on minute observation of natural objects as well as presented wonderful specimens of flight of imagination. They revealed masterly ideas and extra ordinary powers of expression possessed and displayed by the Muslim artists. They used their brush and colour scheme so skillfully and vividly that their creations won applause from all sections of the society.' The Muslim artists faithfully reproduced natural objects and interpreted them with great accuracy and indulgence. An elevated taste of real naturalism became integral part of painting during muslim rule. This art flourished and got lavish patronage from ottoman, Saljuq, Safavid and above all mighty Mughal Kings. Flowers, trees, plants and insects were admirably depicted in manuscripts and paintings as most reliable and faithful replicas of their botanical structure. Beautiful lines, shapes and designs added exquisite beauty and grace to the original or traditional motifs. Muslim artists were emotionally attached to nature and its objects and, therefore, their paintings of
natural objects ornamented by floral motifs and elegant geometric patterns became excellent specimens of workmanship. These decorated paintings were commonly hung on walls and carpets and all types of background suited them and added to their brilliance. Painted carpets were very much in demand in muslim world. Actually they were derivatives belonging to miniature art of painting. But Muslim artists elevated their quality and appearance by using various forms and display of their skill. A comparison between classical miniatures and carpets decorated with floral forms shows that floral forms were rarely used in miniatures because it was not easy to put dense pattern within small space of miniatures.\(^8\) It is also interesting to note that floral forms led to diffusion of artistic patterns in the art of painting. 'A particular type or group of floral forms were commonly used on rugs but in miniature paintings their experiment met with little success.\(^9\)

Scrolling patterns of plants and floral motifs were part of tradition of painting since early days of Byzantine and Sasanian kings.\(^10\) Muslim artists brought excellence and elegance to this art and in India they borrowed some ideas from Hindu school of painting also. Floral elements or designs can be selected in various ranges from natural objects and scenes and arduous reproduction of plants and flowers. From 16\(^{th}\) century onwards artists used symmetrical and repetitive schemes of flower and plant designs which formed diaper patterns.\(^11\) These repetitive and scrolling forms are called Arabeque which means Arab patterns on miniatures used in carpets. The Arabesque has been defined as a particular and exclusively Islamic form of denaturalized ornamentation consisting of split or bifurcated leaves and inorganic tendrils.
The leaves may be flat or curved or pointed or round or rolled, smooth or rough or pierced but are never isolated and are always joined with the stalk called terminal. The stalk may be of spiral form or interlaced through the leaves or using them again from there.\(^{12}\)

'A floral motif may be symmetrical or asymmetrical; simple or complex. It is repeated on the surface either in a planned way or sometimes freely dispersed. There are endless opportunities to arrange or organize these motifs.'\(^{13}\)

In Muslim paintings floral designs having few flowers or bunch of flowers can be seen. There are set rules which are observed in decoration of these motifs.

(i) **Symmetry**\(^{14}\) : Symmetry implies a balance of proportions in respect of size, shape and position of motifs in the painting. All paintings use symmetry in individual motifs or group of motifs as per the pattern followed in the painting.

(ii) **Radial symmetry**\(^{15}\) : In the middle of radial symmetry there is a separate design which has its own importance and an all four corners designs are spread. They may be simple or complicated. Goverdhan in a painting has shown 'Timur handing imperial crown to Babur (Plate 1).'\(^{16}\) It is heavily decorated and there is radial symmetry on Shamiyana and carpet. There are separate designs in the centre and different designs are spread on the four corners of the carpet.

(iii) **Bilateral symmetry**\(^{17}\) : Here same designs are set on both sides parallel to each other. If a mirror is placed before the object one can see exactly the same picture from both sides. In bilateral symmetry at a selected point a balancing form can be designed. In the painting 'Shahjahan in Darbar' (Plate 2).\(^{18}\) On the back wall same designs have been made to have balancing effect. It has been
divided in two parts by a middle door which has exactly same designs on its both sides.

(iv) **Asymmetry**¹⁹: In this design there is no centre point and like bilateral symmetry there are no two equal divisions. A painting captioned “Jahangir seated on an allegorical throne” made by Bichiter (Plate 3)²⁰ is best example of this design. In this paintings there are very dense and thick designs on the carpet but there is no centre or balancing form. It is continuation of scrolling form without any break made by frequent use of patterns. Similarly there is another painting of Deccani Golkunda School named ‘Sufi Sant’ (Plate 4).²¹ In this painting repeated pattern of similar design has been used on the whole carpet.

(v) **Raw** : In Muslim paintings flowers are arranged in a single line, for example, in a painting named ‘Sultan Samples Milk used for Pastry’ included in Nimatnama manuscript (Plate 5).²² In this painting floral motif has been arranged in a line in the upper portion of the painting. Similarly in another painting ‘Shahjahan in Darbar’ (Plate 6)²³ floral pattern in the middle line has been set and small plant are equally arranged in rooms.

The use of patterns in two equal parts is quite common in Muslim paintings. (1) inside the painting and (ii) on the borders or Hahsiya. But in border all patterns are used in scrolling and repeated forms. In some paintings enough space in width has been left on all four sides. In same cases patterns in group form have been used in borders. But in majority of paintings these group patterns have been used to depict different types of background and zigzag,
simple, repeated shapes and wavy floral scrolls have been employed for the purpose. While on Borders and Hashias open floral patterns have been commonly used and bare flowers and plants have been shown for decorative purposes. Here mention is made of a painting of Sultanate period named ‘A Royal Horse and Groom’ (Plate 7).24 In Sultanate period double hashia (Borders) was introduced in paintings. The inner border was divided into boxes and was decorated in various ways and on external Hashiya (border) scrolling form was used.

Similarly in a Mughul painting ‘Timur and Shahjahan(Plate 8)’25 heavy floral decoration with delicate wavy design forms show the mastery and skill of its artist.

In plates 9, 10 & 11 some borders in paintings contain gold edged flower plants, formally arranged in rows and occasionally geometric shapes and designs composed of floral scrolls and abstract arabesques are also depicted. In some other paintings hybrid combination of flowering plants, scrolls and arabesque is found.26

These patterns are important feature of Islamic art of painting and are full of aesthetic charm and zeal. They dominate the paintings and make them lively and beautiful. Categorisation of these patterns speaks of the fine skill and imagery of the artist and shows how successfully he has decorated his paintings with a number of floral designs. These designs helped in creating cheerful and cordial atmosphere and showed the insight of the artists.
(vi) Some floral paintings

The Indian Muslims artists extensively used flowers in scattered as well as full forms to show natural beauty in their paintings. Though these flowers were used within reasonable limits yet they produced dramatical effects to depict various moods and situations elegantly.

Floral painting was at its zenith when Jahangir was the Mughal emperor. He was a great connoisseur of fine arts specially painting. He had a very keen eye and natural instinct to judge the beauty of art and possessed unrivalled knowledge about Persian art of painting. In his court there was a galaxy of talented artists like Abul Hasan Nadiruzzaman, Farrokh Beg, Nadirulsar, Bishan Das, Mansur, Manohar, Gobar Dhan, Daulat and Mohd.- Nadir, Mansur excelled in his natural, floral and animal paintings. He used to inscribe his name as Mansur Naqqah (designer) on his paintings. He made beautiful designs and patterns which were copied on marble, mosaic and other materials.

The emperor liked and patronized these painter artists. He himself often made drawings of beautiful natural objects and coloured them skillfully before them. He gave them new ideas and designs and suggested improvement to their paintings. Mansur’s floral designs specially ‘blue lilies’ (Plate 12) is ranked as a masterpiece of draughtsmanship and combination of colours. In this painting two flowers are shown hanging on a branch of tree along with leaves. One flower is transformed in a plant with its leaves going upwards and there is one raw bud also. The scene presents positive feeling of natural beauty for the viewers.
Earlier 'in Akbar's rule some paintings depicted Darweshs (saints) and in Dara Shikoh's album we find few beautiful pictures of various birds and flowers. But generally flower pictures do not appear first hand or accurate and probably are adoptions of botanical illustrations or copies of contemporary European flowers. However some paintings of Mansur were highly appreciated, viz. 'A night heron' (Plate 13) There a SARAS is standing in water and is looking towards a pink lily at its left side and behind it there are three flowers and four buds. One flower is fully developed and two flowers are bending below and are surrounded by leaves. This type of focus painting makes it very charming, but the expressions in the eyes of saras and blooming flowers do not reflect enough positive feeling or mood.

Other floral painting of Mughal era –

We come across certain paintings of butterflies sitting on exotic pink flowers with plants, insects. One of such same painting deserve special mention captioned 'Two butterflies on pink flowers'. In this painting on a branch of a tree there is one pink flower with two or three stems, some buds and big and broad leaves. This makes it more appealing and attractive. Display of active butterflies moving on flowery plants denotes natural feelings and delicately balance. The plants, flowers and this circular branches make it more charming and real.

In another painting “plants and insects” there are three different types of flowers. One in the middle is fully blooming in the shape of long leave and on its side there are small plants into different shapes of elves. Some insects surround the flowers and add to the beauty of the painting.
In another painting ‘an exotic plant and butterflies’ the flowers are shown blooming beautifully along with whole plant with scrolling form is also visible. But bending of flowers appears to be somewhat a gloomy background.

“Exotic flowers” (Plate 14) in this painting different flowers have been drawn in a natural way but circular and scattered leaves do not conform to natural depiction. In “Exotic flower” two different flowers in one plant have been shown with two circular types of leaves. The fully grown flowers, however, show some restlessness. Similar restlessness is evident in the painting called “exotic flowers and insects”. Here flowers are bent downwards and Persian type cloud has been shown in the background.

All these floral paintings are surrounded by repetition of floral motifs and it gives them somewhat dreamy form. Such motifs in a painting named ‘plants with single flower’ and have been used by artist in the form of a pattern. ‘Group of servants’ (Plate 15). Another painting in Jahangir’s album “single flower and plants” has been shown through broad designs. In Ahmadabad in a painting called ‘young prince Riding’ (Plate 16) floral plants have been used as motif in the background and simple borders have also been repeated as motifs. These things make the painting very rich and beautiful. Thus floral motifs and natural form make paintings good pieces of decoration. Use of flowers in border have been a popular pattern used by artists. The dramatic and natural touches given by flowers and floral motifs enable the paintings to give better frame work of expression. Artists have used them to depict charming as well gloomy or dull situations as per their satisfaction. But every flower has its own identity and is not dependent on another as can be seen in arabesque patterns.
C. Connection of Beauty in Islam

In Quran, creation of the universe has been described an example of aesthetic taste. One will notice a very elegant pattern of beauty and harmony in the way all things were put in order by the supreme creator. This is confirmed in these words of Quran:

"who hath created seven heavens in harmony. Thou (Muhammad) can see no fault in the Beneficent one’s creation. Then look again, Can thou see any deficiency or rift? Look again and again yet thy sight will return unto thee weakened and dimmer". 38

It says further “Verily We have adorned this heaven with the stars (for beauty)." 39

‘And the things created for your use are adorned with beauty. (It is) for you to behold and ponder’.

“And the cattle, He has them for you, in them there is warmth created, (warm clothing) and numerous benefits and of them you eat, and wherein is beauty for you, when ye bring them home, in the evening, and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning”.” 40

Even on the day of judgment, beauty will have its role to play as it radiates from the faces of the people of paradise showing their happiness and full satisfaction:

“Some faces, that Day, shall be Nadirah shining and radiant”. 41
So in the light of all these and many other verses in the Quran, it is clear that beauty is reckoned with in Islam. In addition to this, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessing be upon him) said that:

A verse in Holy Quran proclaims “Almighty Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty’. It explains the term beauty and its significance in the world. If the form is beautiful it will make everything appear beautiful and its every influence will look beautiful. Thus beauty is an eternal element of physical as well as metaphysical world”. The Hadith quoted from prophet confirms that though nobody has seen Allah, yet all His creations are so beautiful and subtle that we have to believe that He is embodiment of perfect beauty. Thus beauty has been used to define and describe beautiful things in a beautiful manner.

‘Sura-al-Naml, which describes the story of the visit of a Queen to Solomon is a very good specimen of aesthetic narration.

King Solomon invites the queen to enter his palace. Its floor is made of fine glass or crystal: Mistaking it for water, the queen lifts up her dress to avoid getting it wet. Solomon corrects her mistake and declares that the palace floor is made of glass.42

Thus textual analysis proves that Solomon’s palace with glass floor was beautifully decorated with “works of art”. This is ample evidence to show that the aesthetic expression of the verse yields a truly practical application.

This experience consists of a mistaken visual perception by the queen of the mysterious glass device in Solomon’s palace. Quranic text lays down an aesthetic example of visual forms in domain of art and architecture. The
specific appearance and qualities of transparency and flatness of the material, its white or green colour, the apparent presence of living sea creatures, the real water beneath it and so on reveals the deep aesthetic atmosphere prevailing in Solomon’s palace.

Actually, this Quranic depiction of story has given rise to various aesthetic principles that are widely applied in artistic forms and architecture in Islam. The glass pattern shared with ceramic, stone or marble arrangements in monuments, especially in geometrical decoration and organization corresponds with what we usually call “ornamentation” forms an “overall” decoration of combined and repeated elements that adorn a wall, floor arch or other parts of the building.

Such ornamentations do present a concrete theme inspired by nature in the form of various types of flower motifs found in Islamic ceramics or textiles. Nevertheless, in many cases, the composition and decorative arrangement is a result of free and fine imagination.

These aesthetics contained in the Islamic scriptural sources and the existing works of art help us to arrive at a better understanding of artistic patterns.

(i) Beauty according to Islamic Thinkers

“Aesthetics” in the framework of Islamic civilization is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of art and combines experiment of art within natural environment...
Aesthetics, and particularly aesthetic phenomenology, forms a specific and new field, which has been still not taken into account seriously in the realm of Islamic studies although it is fully integrated into contemporary analytical works on art and its theory. Two obstacles appear to be a responsible for this situation. 'The first is the general belief of calling aesthetics a branch of science and a mode of thought which seems to emanate from the philosophical tradition of the modern western world.' Thus it is considered intrinsically linked to the rules, principles and logic of western traditions and consequently is not regarded truly adaptable to the thinking and the arts of other civilizations. 'The second is related to the Islamic concept about the practice of the arts. This concept puts some normative constraints (against the depiction and representation of living things in visual forms) and, on the other hand, it has no clearly defined rules or doctrines outlined in Islamic texts and treatises, like the western world.'

Attempts to study aesthetics, as a specialized branch of thought and to find aesthetic elements in Islamic written sources lead to two paths. One aims towards understanding of aesthetics through the study of texts specially about definition and scope of the concept of beauty. The second way is to apply the doctrine of the creation of art and make direct observation of artistic forms as meaningful objects and get experiences of the line.

(a) Hazm's Approach to Beauty

Study of medieval Arabic aesthetics, characterized by a strong reliance upon other fields of knowledge, manifests itself in particular in a complicated
dual problem of making distinction between physical beauty and divine beauty, and between sensory perceptions and inner perceptions. Observable beauty refers to, or is necessarily understood in relation to the concept of God's beauty. As a result, the visual experience of the beautiful implies, in some way, a spiritual resonance through a poetic perception of a metaphysical nature. Ibn Hazm an eminent muslim thinker dealt with this subject in detail.

The concept of Beauty in Ibn Hazm's thought possesses several dimensions, material, spiritual and ethical. 'However, it appears to be mainly developed in relation to his theories of human attitude on the one hand and moral behaviour, on the other. God's beauty is a pure abstraction. Ibn Hazm attempts to classify and organize the attributes and qualities assigned to perceptible beauty, like sweetness, gentleness or righteousness, into a three tiered hierarchy.\textsuperscript{46}

According to Ibn Hazm, a beautiful person is endowed with all the best properties of beauty. 'A highly poetic and vivid passage in "the Necklace of the Dove" explains vividly the characteristic of Ibn Hazm's approach to beauty:

"Neither the leaves and the plants flourishing after the rain, nor the brightness of the flowers after the clouds pass over with the showers of the temperate season, nor the whisper of the spring tides between the branches in bloom, nor the beauty of white palaces (ta'annug al-qusur al baid) surrounded by green gardens, are better than union with the beloved (Wasl habib). When his qualities (akhlaquhu) satisfy you and you appreciate his innate gifts (Jara iza-hu) then you find that both correspond (to each other) in terms of beauty
(taqabalat fil-husn). This is a fact that neither the rhetoricians can express nor the orators of the best eloquence can describe”.

However intimately linking the concept of beauty with earthly existence, gives birth to a deep human characteristic, viz. the motivation of the union of love is understood as the ultimate aesthetic goal possible through God’s grace. Full and fair enjoyment of the beautiful behaviour, most intellectually and spiritually inclined and linked to the inner perception of the ultimate beauty, namely divine beauty is final goal.

These ideas form the main axis upon which the theory of Beauty turns within the “Zahri” philosophy of Ibn Hazm.

(b) Ibn Rushd’s Views about Beauty

The nature of Beauty was addressed and analysed by Islamic philosophers in the course of discussions about God and His attributes in relation to His creation.

The concept of beauty according to Ibn Rushd does not lead to an authentic theory of aesthetics, because the beautiful is not to be understood either having a value or quality, but has to be dealt with a systematic analytical approach of perceptible reality - conceived as a coherent and ordered whole viz. that is nature created by God.

Ibn Rushd insists on the necessity of applying logic through syllogism and demonstrations in general in order to understand the world.

Ibn Rushd argues that the beautiful identities itself not with a transcendental and sacred value of perfection, but with objective and
observable notions of order (tartib), structural cohesiveness and physical harmony (nizam)⁴⁹:

According to Ibn Rushd, Art is more limited than nature (tabi'a). Thus art generates, within the quantities of colours that exist in the internal logos (al-nutq al-batin), and what the external logos (al-nutq al-kharij) are capable of producing. Meanwhile, nature introduces all things that exists in the immaterial internal logos (al-nutq al-batin al-ruhani), and therefore nature is nobler than art (ashraf min al-Sina'a) and the nobility (sharaf) of the artist will depend on the degree of excellence (jawda) with which he imitates nature within the possible boundaries.⁵⁰

In the absence of any set criterion of beauty for judging works of art, Ibn Rushd says hierarchic value of nobility in accordance with the rational vision of decides about their quality.

(c) Ibn al Haytham’s Approach to Beauty

Ibn al-haytham says things are considered beautiful on two principles. ‘The first is that the generic visual properties or concepts which he listed and counted for determining the corporal constitution of things decide intrinsic beauty for example, light the first in the list of the twenty two generic notions produces beauty (al-daw’ yafal al-husn) through sun, moon and star. There exists nothing to show them beautiful or provide them with a pleasant shape except their light and brightness.⁵¹

The second principle is the modulator or the shaping principle of beauty conveyed by the generic visual concepts into a particular object. It is a measurable and quantifiable and therefore detects beauty easily.⁵²
This modulation process of the beauty operates through the specific combination of one, or several generic visual concepts found in the shape or form of each thing or each type of things. We can specifically identify object and classify them in particular category with the help of sight and perception. Each particular category depends upon specific quality of beauty.\textsuperscript{53}

According to Ibn al Haytham’s theory beauty existing in things must be perceived by the individual in full complexity, variation and subtlety. Classical Arabic thought divides beauty into various categories such as (a) the sublimely beauty found in the human being (b) yoked with ethics in Ibn Hazm’s theory, (c) phenomenologically modulated and classified beauty of Ibn al Haytham, (d) diametrically opposite versions of luminescent and intellectual beauty emerging from the divine sources advocated by Ibn Sina and (e) the beautiful structural order of the material world mentioned by al Ibn Rushd. In a sense all kinds of beauty – logical, metaphysical, physical and ethical find a place in medieval Islam.

Islamic culture is full of aesthetic sense whether it may refer to logical beauty or to metaphysical, physical or ethical one and the subject because of beautiful expression make us pleased and refreshed.

The story of Hazrat Suleman (King and Prophet Solomon) possesses a strong aesthetic sense. He built beautiful glass flooring in his place which looked like beautiful real water. Islamic artists have profusely used beautiful patterns, ideas and forms to make mosques, palaces and picturesque and beautiful gardens. In Muslim world beautiful geometric and floral patterns have
been used to make mosques the places of worship more beautiful and attractive.

Quran itself is a beautiful work and contains strong aesthetic sense in its verses. The words and phrases infatuate people’s mind and enhance respect of the holy Book. Beautiful patterns and designs have been made by Muslim artists to decorate and illuminate copies of Holy Quran very nicely. This decorative illumination later on became an integral part of painting art. Even now efforts are being made to make paintings more beautiful by using elegant brilliant and beautiful floral patterns.

D. Unity of Life and Peace

'Islamic works of art specially paintings have a common symbolic quality. They convey the message irrespective of ultimate religious or philosophical status of forms and patterns of different floral or arabesque combination. They represent true models and reflections of nature experienced by human beings.\(^{54}\)

'The artists makes several experiments to understand and to explain the themes on which he works faithfully. The underlying principle of this exercise is that the artist himself must fully understand the subject which he wants to place before viewers and realizes his duty and functions amply. In Islamic paintings the subject matter or theme fully collaborates its nature with philosophy or logic.

'Muslim artists have used floral patterns to denote deep and highly mystic meanings or explanations. However certain pieces of Islamic art appear
to the ambiguous. Generally speaking they look beautiful and at the same time represent Islamic spirit or philosophy in a comprehensive aesthetic sense. Of course floral motifs help us in understanding nature of truth because flowers are symbols of beauty and represent true feelings of human beings. They are being extensively used for keeping environment peaceful and beautiful. Man always takes support from flowers to get some relief or satisfaction and regards them as suitable measure to judge and explain beauty. In this respect flowers play model role of a patent. They affirm that world is a garden of love, peace and beauty created by God. The divine message is evident everywhere viz. "blessed are those who love my creatures".

Usually flowers blossom during spring and they are regarded symbol of spring or rejuvenation. Change of seasons indicate uniform rhythms of nature and fragrance of flowers draw our attention to free rhythm which is a symbol of life and its cycle.

We see blossoming and decay of flowers and the same life cycle is seen among human beings. One is born and the other dies and this is the law of nature, but unity and continuity of life never comes to an end. Flowers are true symbol of process of life. "When we see some beautiful things we recall the essence and roots of life and realize true humanity." Flowers are embodiment of beauty and give pleasure and peace to their viewers within their short span of life. They bring smile on lips of a man and revive positive feeling of hope and pleasure in him. They teach us the lesson that death and decay are inevitable in this world. But life is also a truth and it continues along with death.
without any break. In the hub-hub and intensity of life flowers with their fragrance make us happy and content but they themselves do not smell or enjoy it.

.... Current research lays emphasis on the close link between Mughal gardens and agriculture. It says that the gardens, though, usually interpreted in aesthetic sense as symbol or part of paradise, yet have vitally significant productive dimension in their basis. It is understood that the gardens are full of many different flowers, and according to Muslim artists, these images of paradise reflect a lush world full of flowers and their fragrance. Paradise is the ultimate end of this world and is really a place of perfection and beauty. This mortal life is transitory and full of fallacies. It is really like a mirage where sand particles look like fake water. Whole life is full of fluctuations, ups and downs and is not eternal. Paradise is ever lasting and eternal and is free from all deficiencies of mortal life.

Floral motifs play an important role in display and explanation of divine laws. The scrolling and repetitive motifs draw our attention towards everlasting and unchanged laws of God specially, blossoming of fresh flowers and their decay. Change of season and other universal laws which pervade the whole universe explain the philosophy of life. The beautiful patterns and their repetitive forms joined with each other leave impressions of peace and positive feeling on their viewers.

Floral motifs look more beautiful than natural objects. They are apparently the hand decorated simple paintings but on the other hand convey
certain hidden mystical meanings also. According to Islamic aesthetic sense they reflect internal beauty. The blossoming and decay of flowers give positive expression and explanation of philosophy of life. These flowers are messengers of peace and point out the most real and eternal place paradise after the final decay of this mortal world.

The abstract form of these flowers has not changed its wonderful meaning and their scrolling and repetitive forms help in a wonderful presentation and explanation of unchanging law of universe.
Plate - 1: Timur Handing The Imperial Crown to Babur (Radial Symmetric Balance)
Plate - 2: Shajahan in Darbar
(Bilateral Symmetric Balance)
Plate - 3: Jahangir Seated on an Allegorical Throne (Asymmetric Design)
Plate - 4: Sufi Sant (Asymmetric Design)
Plate - 5: Sultan Samples Milk Used for Pastry Nimathama (Raw Design)
Plate - 6: Shahjahan in Darbar (Raw Design)
Plate - 7: A Royal Horse and Groom
(Floral Design in Hashiya)
Plate - 8: Taimur and Shahjahan
(Floral Design in Hashiya)
Plate - 9: The Birth of a Prince, Page from Jahangir Nama (Floral Design in Hashiya)
Plate - 10: Calligraphy from Shahjahan Album (Floral Design in Hashiya)
Plate - 11: Shah Jahan examining the Royal Seal (Floral Design in Hashiya)
Plate - 15: Group of Servants
Plate - 16: Young Prince Riding
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