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THE SEMIOTICS IN PLANT MOTIFS OF BAKHTARI MENTAL WEAVER RUGS

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The motifs of trees and plants are one of the most common motifs on the weaving of Iranian ethnics from the ancient to the present time. These motifs are one of important mythological and sacred motifs that are considered one of the most important motifs in Bakhtiari rugs and used in various kinds in the main motif or in texture design. The importance of plant and tree motifs in Bakhtiari rugs are to the extent that one of the main semiotics of this kind of rugs, is the cypress tree motif in brick-shaped design. However, despite the great importance, these motifs have received little attention from scientists, carpet researchers, and caused the motifs to be in the risk of forgotten. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention at the motifs that are based on the beliefs of weavers in relation to their nature and habits. The research method is descriptive and historical research and data collecting is conducted in the form of library study for historical sources and field interview by weavers.

Keywords: Motifs; Mental Weaver, Bakhtiari Nomads, Myth.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting types of Iranian carpets is called Iliati (tribal) carpet that accounted as the ancient and genuine designs in Iranian carpets. Among these designs and carpets can point to carpet of Bakhtiari, half of its reputation is related to utilization symbolic figures that are subjectively knitted. Stylish and simplified figures outside of any realistic or pragmatic trait, beyond what of their unadorned appearances, they are plenty of mysterious concepts and implications, concepts in relation to credence and beliefs of weaver about its natural perimeter.

STATEMENT THE BASIC MATERIAL RESERCH

Among these most important figures can mention for designs of plants and trees in carpet of Bakhtiari that save its holiness from far past until now, among women who are tribal weavers. This figure in ancient ages was used as synonymous with renaissance, renewal of life, felicity and source of life, in symbology, (to link three levels of the world together « underground, on earth, height and sky» (Cavalier, 2000: 188). And among common beliefs of people it shows happiness, greenness and life and in Bakhtiais' beliefs particularly if it grew solely and become old has high status and order and accounted as saints up to the where women and girls to knit it cloth for realization their wishes and bless it and to request their problems solutions. Sanctity of trees and plants is very high between Bakhtiari people so that they believe if a person causes harm to plants he commits a guilty action and the

person will catch God's scourge. Therefore to forgive by God the person ought to sacrifice a rooster near the stem of damaged plant, and or in their funeral, they put two branches of tree that linked via the stem, beneath bosom of corpse and they construe it as rod, and believe that this rod will help spirit of the dead at very start of passed away travel. Certainly these beliefs are inspired and continuance of beliefs of ancient Iranians in relation to guardian tree's goddess (Oruz), and tree or herb also are symbols of eternity and regeneration of life, these symbols keep their presence impressively among women of tribe and sometimes it shows in the most important art of Bakhtiaris' tribes and peasants as main or secondary role. Therefore, we discuss about most frequent herbal figures in carpet of Bakhtiari.

1. Willow tree (Bid Majnoon)

Willow tree is a wild plant and generally grows plentifully along riversides, lakes and pathways in Bakhtiaris' geographic zone.

In classic symbology «this tree is emblem of mourning, love without happiness, funeral and spellbound, and it is holy for Artemis» (kooper, 2007: 64).

Willow tree in Bakhtiaris' beliefs however, is symbol of life, amazement, female, love and perplexity, and its figure is being used a lot in adobe design of Bakhtiari's carpet. «Toraj Joule in his book with title of a study about Iranian carpet, professed : Impression of willow that is named weepy willow by most western people, is full of sorrow, the west or narrations about this impressive role imply on carpet of mourning and say that this carpet has been woven for covering grave and funeral» (Joule, 2002: 24).

But exactly at the contrary point of such thinking the willow tree in Bakhtiari's carpet implies on specific greenness and lively and in their beliefs it is a symbol of love and fascination. This role is setting next to cedar, sometimes. Possibly, reminder of woman and man who fell in love of each other or because cedar figure in weaver mind is a portray of husband and herself man, to sit willow beside it certainly suggests weaver much desire to marriage with her beloved person or love for her partner, if this impressive figure used solely, also can be a symbol of love and fascination and perplexity of its *weaver*.



Figure 1 : Willow tree (Bid Majnoon).

2. Plane-tree (Chendar)

«the oldest historical writ regarding plane-tree is narrated by Herodotus , he is saying: the last king of Modd dynasty (Aji Dehak) dreamed his daughter Mandana that ,she became mother of the great Cyrus , branches of plane-tree and grapevine have been grew from Mondana womb and covered throughout Asia, dream interpreters and astronomers of the king explained the dream in this manner : Mandana will give birth a son who destroy Modd dynasty and will capture the world , because plane-tree is sign of king and grapevine is sign of queen and twisting grapevine and plane-tree is sign of continuity of reign by means of blood. Plane tree in Iranian mythology is symbol of richness, greenness, nature and cause to bliss and of divinities and sprites. While Darius the great was in Asia Minor received a golden plane-tree and grapevine as gift , thereafter this gift was set in the king's room, often» (Zabeti Jahromi, 2010: 288—302). «ancient Iranian believed plane-tree is king of trees , also they believed old plane-tree is bestowing high bliss and productivity to land and family and causes to expectancy and healthy of women, therefore in some regions old plane-tree was supposed tree of wishes » (Yahaghi, 1990: 17).

«In addition plane –tree is the biggest tree with the longest life among trees of Iran and its height is high so that can be seen from far distance, this tree peeling annually and its thick branches becomes light green color. This annual Juvenescent causes to sanctify the tree , plane-tree is symbol of glory , magnificence and edification» (kooper, 2007: 115). And in Bakhtiaris' beliefs this tree is showing glory, height, youth, shadow (comfort and calmness), and originality, also Bakhtiaris have a proverb «plane-tree if has not fruit however has widespread and favorite shadow» and this aspect expresses magnificence

Greenness and youthful of this tree. Probably tribal people favorably enjoyed of the shadow of this tree and this plant caused their comfort , in addition they believe plane-tree is an original tree and its roots are very deep and stable. To use this figure in texture of Bakhtiari's adobe carpet in addition to glory and magnificence also emphasizes on youth and power of productivity, originality or chastity of family or genetic traits transmission through blood because Bakhtiari people believe to genetic and congenital, a lot.



Figure 2: Plane-tree (Chendar).

3. Chestnut (Balit)

This tree is sacred in many traditions and due to its strong, long life and stability is accounted as ideal mystery of cosmictree (Kooch Noor, 2005: 152). chestnut enjoys privileges of God, because arrests lightning and is symbol of glory and magnificence. Usually, this plant was equivalent to power in all places and times (Cavalier, 2000: 110). In classic symbology chestnut is symbol of «protection, durability, courage, reality, man, human body and its specific sign or lord of heaven and productivity, therefore possibly it is also symbol of lightning and fire» (Koooper, 2007: 60). Life expectancy of this tree nearly estimated 400 to 1000 years, and in Bakhtiari's domain that include woods of chestnut , this plant is very important and plays important role in worldly and economic life of Bakhtiari 's tribe and the tribe regards it very valuable. Bakhtiari use wood of this tree for making agricultural tools such as handle of plow, stock, and gadgets like tripod of musk, pillar of tent, club of men, roof shield, weaving tools like scaffold of carpet and Korkit for combustible material, cooking and heating, leaves of the tree were used for feeding of livestock and inner skin of its fruit, is called Joft, is being used for preparing musk, flour of chestnut fruit is also using for baking bread and it can be mixed with yoghurt uses for traditional remedy as constipated material to prevent diarrhea. important role of this tree among Bakhtiari people is high so that they know it as holy tree , in order that when a son coming out into the chestnut woods they nominate the boy Balooti, because it is a sacred tree.«This plant in their beliefs is symbol of resistance, power, bliss and long life, same traits that a Bakhtiari person feels in himself and supposes double with it.

Chestnut fruit is hard and useful , opened a part for itself in oral literature of the tribe and sounds it is symbol of Bakhtiari themselves , symbol of a male identity» (Madadi, 2007: 91,92). This expressive figure of carpet in addition to key and important role that this plant plays in Bakhtiari's life also it is originated from their beliefs in relation to chestnut so that Bakhtiari woman by weaving this expressive figure imagining her spouse or great men of the tribe stable and immortal, in her mind.

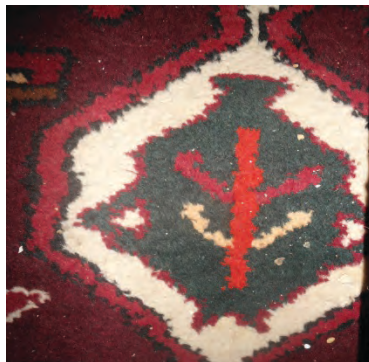


Figure3: Chestnut (Balit).

4. Tulip (Golsor)

Don't snip off tulip this sign promises coming spring; let an amorous merry girl to lop it.

This flower is called scathing flower too, because of fiery or very red color of the edges and blacked middle, this flower plentifully existing in geographical limit of Bakhtiari, so that all plains of the region is full of tulips at May.

Tulip is called Golsor (red) in dialect of Bakhtiari and in their belief it a symbol of coming spring , short life, sign of blood and love and amorous are ineffectual and using this expressive figure in adobe carpet of Bakhtiari can shows weaver of carpet spiritual moods, and the weaver by using this design in her carpet in addition of elegance, also use it as a symbol of ineffectual love of springtime or as memorial of lost youth.



Figure 4:Tulip (Golsor).

5. Plum tree (sisten)

Plum tree major grows in Zagros Mountains and in Bakhtiari beliefs this plant is symbol of Zagros Mountains. Generally, if we know carpet of Bakhtiari as symbol of their geographical region this figure is the first fence (brim) of the carpet, because this expressive figure to a great extent is being used at the small edge of Bakhtiari's carpet and can be indicator and explanatory of around mountains where they are living.



Figure 5: Plum tree (sisten)

CONCLUSION

Living in pastures and neighborhood with nature cause Bakhtiari tribes account nature as a sacred factor and main source of life, this holiness is high to such a degree most elements of nature include plants are playing important role in Bakhtiaris simple life, they believe these factors to carry paranormal and supernatural forces. Figures of plants and trees that are distinctive traits designs of Bakhtiari's carpet than other Iranian ethnic groups' carpets, to indicate very important role of these plants in their geographical life and holiness that they believe it. Belief that they indebted it all their life. These beliefs are originated from Bakhtiaris' women who weave the carpet and due to their extreme need for these plants to survive and ongoing life and sometimes affected by ancient Iranian beliefs and to assimilate these beliefs with basics of Islamic cognition and their settlement.

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