

# ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE SETHI HAVELI, PESHAWAR



By

**Samina Saleem**

Registration No.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**(ASIAN STUDIES)**

TO

TAXILA INSTITUTE OF ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS  
QUAID-I- AZAM UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

**JANUARY 2020**

# ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE SETHI HAVELI, PESHAWAR



By

**Samina Saleem**

Registration No.

**TAXILA INSTITUTE OF ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS**

**QUAID-I- AZAM UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD**

**JANUARY 2020**

## **AUTHOR’S DECLARATION**

I Samina Saleem hereby declare that the PhD thesis entitles “Art and Architecture of the Sethi haveli, Peshawar.” is a result of my original research and has not been submitted to any other Institute for any other degree.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation the University has the right to withdraw my PhD degree.

SAMINA SALEEM

PhD. Candidate

## **Plagiarism Undertaking**

I solemnly declare that research work presented in the thesis entitled “Art and Architecture of the Sethi haveli, Peshawar” is solely my research work with no significant contribution/ help wherever taken has been duly acknowledged and that complete thesis has been written by me.

I understand the zero tolerance policy of the HEC and Quaid-i- Azam University Islamabad towards plagiarism. Therefore, I as an author of the above titled thesis declare that no portion of my thesis has been plagiarized and my material used as reference is properly referred/cited.

I undertake if I am found guilty of any formal plagiarism in the above titled thesis even after award of PhD degree, the University reserves the right to withdraw/revoke my PhD Degree and that the HEC and the University has the right to publish my name on the HEC/ University Website on which names of students are placed who submitted plagiarized thesis.

Author’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Author’s Name: Samina Saleem

## Abstract

The research is based on the documentation of “Art and architecture of the Sethi haveli, Peshawar”. It is a case study of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli Peshawar (commonly known as Sethi haveli), which is presently in the possession of Department of Archaeology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This research is based on the documentation, and finding of the historical evidences related to the Sethi Havelis<sup>1</sup> in general and *Zanan Khana*<sup>2</sup> of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli in particular. In this research the decorative elements are given due importance and it has also been proved at some point that these decorative elements have some symbolic value, and use of Islamic design in the *haveli* has association with deeper Sufistic approach. The research question rotates around the main focus on documentary investigation of the haveli but with special emphasis on the utilization of the artistic decorative elements applied in the Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli in Mohallah<sup>3</sup> Sethian Peshawar. The study revealed some significant facts about the cultural and heritage value of these haveli buildings, that were not only used for residential purpose but they had significance more than that. Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli was used for residential as well as business purpose. The presence of record that was found in the haveli regarding their sub business houses that worked in other countries of the world proved that the Sethi house was used for business office. This research provided a unique chance to study the fabric of palace like residences that were called havelis due to their social, religious or business significance. The walled city of Peshawar is overwhelmingly filled with enormous havelis. The research is divided in to two sections: first section is focused on the history of Peshawar, history of Sethi family and architecture of the Karim Bakhsh haveli Peshawar; while the second section is based on the decorative elements and application of design in wood work, Cheeni khanas, Khatam bandi, fresco painting and painted ceilings with the worldview of an artist and art lover. This process of

---

<sup>1</sup> Sethi Mansion

<sup>2</sup> Special place of living for the female

<sup>3</sup> Enclave

detailed documentation provided cultural insights, into the processes of design, construction, procurement, and inhabitation of the haveli. During this detailed analysis of the haveli, along with indigenous some international influences have also been notified. Local architect and artist families have been located and oral interviews provided some clues to the unparalleled artwork of the haveli Karim Bakhsh Sethi. Since this haveli was owned by a well-established businessman of his time and it was used as a business center with its sub-offices in other countries of the world like Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, India, Britain and some other Central Asian countries. So it reflects influences of these places in its architecture, as especially in art of the haveli both local and international influences are evident. In the research and documentation process other eminent havelis of Peshawar were also briefly documented and photographed for better understanding of haveli architecture.

This research is analytical as far as the documentation of the decorative elements is concerned. It will open new vistas for the future researchers to research the objectives of decoration in the *haveli*. It also fulfills the desire of the researcher to fill the gap in research related to the art and architecture of the haveli by looking at it from the eye of an art enthusiast. In order to appreciate the artwork of the haveli from a different perspective; of an artist and art enthusiast, analytical drawings and paintings have been created by the researcher to understand the value and application of design in the Sethi haveli Peshawar.

The study fills a significant gap in the documentation of research in havelis. Keeping in view the work of previous researchers which was usually specified on the different sections of the haveli, more emphasis is given on the architectural and decorative elements of the haveli with the point of view of an art enthusiast. Previously the Sethi haveli was documented in bits and pieces but this research unveils new horizons in the field of documentary research. The research concludes with the need for continuous restoration and conservation of such heritage places that can be used as a great source of income generation and tourism development.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	xx
Dedication.....	xxi
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter: 1. GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PESHAWAR.....</b>	<b>25</b>
1.1. Name, Geography and History of Peshawar.....	25
1.2. Geographical and Historical Background of Peshawar:.....	28
1.3. Peshawar as an Indigenous city and as a mirror of history.....	31
1.4. <i>Faseel Sher</i> (wall of the city) and doors.....	32
1.5. History of Peshawar.....	35
1.6. Early period.....	37
1.7. Mohallah.....	38
1.8. The havelis of Peshawar, general features.....	42
<b>Chapter 2: SIGNIFICANT HAVELIS OF PESHAWAR.....</b>	<b>43</b>
2.1. Havelis and their affiliation with merchants.....	43
2.2. The concept and development of havelis after 1857.....	44
2.3. Havelis as a status symbol in Subcontinent.....	45
2.4. Typical haveli components.....	47
2.5. Perfect Geometry for the haveli courtyard.....	48
2.6. Haveli of Raj Kapoor.....	49
2.7. Dilip Kumar's residence.....	54

2.8. House of Shahrukh Khan.....	56
2.9. <i>Haveli</i> of Haji Ahmad Gull built in A.H. 1300. A.D. 1882.....	59
2.10. <i>Sethi Mohallah</i> arches.....	64
2.11. <i>Shahnashin</i> .....	66
2.12. <i>Arusis</i> .....	66
2.13. <i>Mutakkas</i> .....	67
2. 14. Cheeni Khanas.....	67
2.14. Haji Ayub Sethi haveli.....	72
2.15. Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi, <i>Mardan Khana</i> (special place for the male).....	74
2.16. Outer views of different havelis in Peshawar especially in Qissa Khwani bazaar.....	76
<b>CHAPTER 3: HISTORY OF <i>SETHI</i> FAMILY.....</b>	<b>78</b>
3.1. The <i>Sethis</i> .....	79
3.2. Family of <i>Sethis</i> .....	91
3.3. Haji Hafiz Khan Bahadur Karim Bakhsh Sethi.....	96
3.4. Birth and early life.....	96
3.5. Business of Haji Karim Bakhsh.....	97
3. 6. Religious, National and social services of Karim Bakhsh Sethi.....	98
3.7. Trade and commerce centers of Sethi Karim Bakhsh.....	100
3.8. Salient features of down fall of Sethi Business.....	101
3.9. Death of Haji Kareem Bakhsh Sethi.....	103



**CHAPTER 4: SETHI HAVELI OF HAJI KARIM BAKHSH SETHI.....106**

4.1. Location of Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli.....106

4.2. Introduction of the building.....110

4.3. Material and construction techniques used in the haveli karim Bakhsh.....116

4.4. Types of Wood.....119

4.5. Architecture of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....120

4.6. False ceilings.....122

4.7. Ground floor plan of the existing *haveli* building.....125

4.8. Inner area description of first courtyard and rooms.....131

4.9. Staircase Jharokas in Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....143

4.10. Teh khana of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli .....144

4.11. First floor description of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli*.....149

4.12. The eastern bala khana room 13.....153

4.13. The northern *bala-khana* (room 9) first floor.....154

4.14. Southern dalan of 1<sup>st</sup> floor.....156

4.15. Top floor or roof of the Haveli .....156

**CHAPTER 5: WOOD WORK, CEILINGS, WINDOWS AND ISLAMIC DESIGN OF THE  
HAVELI HAJI KARIM BAKHSH.....161**

5.1. Types of decorative wood work.....163

5.2. Naqqashi.....163

5.3. Ceilings of karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....	167
5.4. Use of Geometric designs and patterns in Karim Bakhsh haveli Peshawar.....	169
5.5. The evolution of Star shape geometric Islamic design and its utilization in havelis.....	174
5.6. The symbolic value of Star in Islamic decoration.....	178
5.7. Colours used on haveli ceilings .....	183
5.8. Punjali.....	183
5.9. Punjali technique.....	186
5.10. The history of Punjali wood work.....	186
5.11. Abdul Hakim, the Punjali artist and wood carver of Peshawar.....	187
5.12. Windows.....	188
5.13. Use of traditional <i>Jali</i> in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....	191
5.14. Decorative patterns and motives used in wood carving of Karim Bakhsh haveli.....	193
5.15. Arabesque.....	195
5.16. Mustakka in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....	196
5.17. <i>roshan dan</i> or ventilators.....	199
5.18. Ling chi motive.....	201
<b>CHAPTER 6: CHEENI KHANAS, FRESCO PAINTINGS AND COMPARISON WITH A SIKH HAVELI IN RAWALPINDI.....</b>	<b>202</b>
6.1. Cheeni khana.....	202
6.2. Paintings in the haveli.....	206

6.3. Oldest technique of mural painting.....	206
6.4. Material, style and technique of Rajput paintings and its influence in the haveli work.....	207
6.5. Mural paintings in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.....	209
6.6. Material used in both havelis.....	2012
6.7. Material used in both havelis.....	2013
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>219- 245</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Fig. 1. 1. Map of Peshawar. Source: <a href="https://www.google.com.pk_M%3A">https://www.google.com.pk_M%3A</a> . accessed on 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2015.....	25
2. Fig. 1. 2. Google Map of Peshawar. Source: <a href="https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Map+of+peshawar">https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Map+of+peshawar</a> . Accessed on 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2015...29	29
3. Fig. 1. 3. Babe Khyber. Source: <a href="https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Babe+khyber">https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Babe+khyber</a> . Accessed on September 5 <sup>th</sup> 2015.....	31
4. Fig. 1. 4. Aerial view of Peshawar. Source: <a href="https://www.google.com/search?q=peshawar&amp;client=firefox-b-">https://www.google.com/search?q=peshawar&amp;client=firefox-b-</a> . accessed on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 .....	29
5. Fig. 2. 1. Geometry of courtyard. Source: Drawing by Samra Khan accessed on 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2015.....	48
6. Fig. 2. 2. A haveli on the way in Qissa Khwani bazar. Source: Author, March 11 <sup>th</sup> 2014.....	49
7. Fig. 2. 3. Portrait of Raj Kapoor... Source: <a href="https://www.google.com/search?q=Raj+Kapoor&amp;client=firefox-b-">https://www.google.com/search?q=Raj+Kapoor&amp;client=firefox-b-</a> Accessed on October 14 <sup>th</sup> 2015.....	50
8. Fig. 2. 4. A view of Raj Kapoor haveli. Source: Author, 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2015.....	50
9. Fig. 2. 5. Jharoka of Raj Kapoor haveli. Source: Author, 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2015.....	51
10. Fig. 2. 6. Another view of Jharoka. Source: Author, 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2015.....	52
11. Fig. 2. 7. Outer view of Raj Kapoor haveli. Source: Author, 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2015.....	53
12. Fig. 2. 8. Pillars at the Raj Kapoor haveli. Source: Author, 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2015.....	54

13. Fig. 2. 9. Portrait of Dilip Kumar. Source: <a href="https://www.desimartini.com/celebrities/bollywood/dilip-kumar/">https://www.desimartini.com/celebrities/bollywood/dilip-kumar/</a> Accessed on 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2015.....	54
14. Fig. 2. 10. Front view of Dilip Kumar haveli. Source: Author 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2015.....	55
15. Fig. 2. 11. Portrait of Shahrukh Khan. Source: <a href="https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=shahrukh+khan&amp;rlz=">https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=shahrukh+khan&amp;rlz=</a> Accessed 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2015.....	56
16. Fig. 2. 12. Board displayed at the door of Shahrukh Khan haveli. Source: Author 12 February 2016.....	57
17. Fig. 2. 13. Shahrukh Khans cousin and Saleem Afzal. Source: Author 12 Dec 2015.....	58
18. Fig. 2. 14. Shahrukh haveli outer view. Source: Author 12 Dec 2015.....	59
19. Fig. 2. 15. Entrance of Haji Ahmad Gull haveli. Source: Author 14 April. 2016.....	61
20. Fig. 2. 16. Beautifully carved entrance. Source: Author 13 April 2016.....	62
21. Fig. 2. 17. View of rooms around the atrium. Source: Author 14 April 2016.....	63
22. Fig. 2. 18. A view of the sitting room from the atrium. ... Source: Author 14 April 2016.....	63
23. Fig. 2. 19. Detail of pillars. Source: Author 12 April 2016.....	65
24. Fig. 2. 20. Details of carving on the arches of Haji Ahmad Gull haveli. Source: Author 14 February 2016.....	65
25. Fig. 2. 21. Cheeni khana. Source: Author 14 April 2016.....	67
26. Fig. 2. 22. A view of Cheeni khana in the main lounge of the haveli. Source: Author 14 April 2016.....	68
27. Fig. 2. 23. A mirror fixed in the main lounge and fresco painting around it. Source: Author 15 April 2016.....	69
28. Fig. 2. 24. Mirror fixed in a boarder of jewel like mirror work. Source: Author 15 Dec 2016.....	70

29. Fig. 2. 25. Details of a pot. Source: Saleem Afzal 14 February 2016.....	70
30. Fig. 2. 26. Collection of Rabia Sethi. Source: Saleem Afzal 15 February 2016.....	71
31. Fig. 2. 27. A Chandler in lounge. Source: Saleem Afzal 14 February 2016.....	71
32. Fig. 2. 28. Outer view of the gate with a connecting bridge to the next haveli. Source: Author 15 February 2016.....	72
33. Fig. 2. 29. Inner view of the gate. Source: Author 15 February 2016.....	73
34. Fig. 2. 30. Terrace of haveli opening in the atrium. Source: Author 15 February 2016.....	73
35. Fig. 2. 31. Outer view of Mardan khana entrance of Haji Kareem Bakhsh. Source: Author 15 February 2016 .....	74
36. Fig. 2. 32. Detail of an arch at the gate with glazed stucco. Source: Author 15 February 2016...	75
37. Fig. 2. 33. View of a haveli in Qissa Khwani bazaar. Source: Author 15 February 2016.....	76
38. Fig. 4.1. Google map of Sethi haveli pedestrian: approach. Source: Yasmin Lari, Google Map accessed on 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2016  <a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/data.hoggit.com/12647.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=1XBSJEP0NEJJCA8JNVG2&amp;Expires=1551398400&amp;Signature=ZKsY83rmQPLG3wsZHmAMcpVOW5o%3D">https://s3.amazonaws.com/data.hoggit.com/12647.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=1XBSJEP0NEJJCA8JNVG2&amp;Expires=1551398400&amp;Signature=ZKsY83rmQPLG3wsZHmAMcpVOW5o%3D</a>  .....	107
39. Fig. 4. 2. Board displayed at the entrance of Sethi Street. Source: Author 15 February 2016....	107
40. Fig.4. 3. A view of dome, copulas and ceiling of Sethi mosque Source: Author 15 February 2016 .....	108
41. Fig. 4. 4. Entrance of Karim Bakhsh Haveli Source: Author 15 February.....	109
42. Fig. 4. 5. The panoramic view of the Interior Atrium of Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli Source: 15 Feb 2016.....	111
43. Fig. 4. 6. View of Stained glass window from north dalan Source: Author 15 Feb 2016.....	112
44. Fig. 4. 7. Board displayed by the Department of archaeology.....	114
45. Fig. 4. 8. Present entrance of Karim Bakhsh haveli.....	115

46. Fig. 4.9. View showing Waziri bricks.....	117
47. Fig. 4. 10. A view of The khana with use of bricks.....	117
48. Fig. 4. 11.A. All plans of the haveli.....	121
49. Fig. 4. 11. Cross section plan of the haveli by khan. Source: Samra Mohsin Khan.....	122
50. Fig. 4. 12. A view of south bala khana Source: Author 12 Jan 2017.....	123
51. Fig. 4. 13. Ground floor Plan.....	126
52. Fig. 4. 14. Moeena Sethi talking about the havel. Source: Author 12 <sup>th</sup> jan 2017.....	127
53. Fig. 4. 15. Renovated fountain. Source: Alam Nawaz 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	128
54. Fig. 4. 16. A view of four stairs ending in atrium. Source: Alam Nawaz 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	129
55. Fig. 4. 17. Main bala khana on south with sliding door. Source: Author 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	130
56. Fig. 4. 18. A view of south bala khana. Source: Author 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	131
57. Fig. 4. 19. Cheeni khana and fire place. Source 12 Jan 2017.....	132
58. Fig. 4. 20. Coloured glass window. Source: Author 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017 .....	133
59. Fig. 4. 21. Ceiling of south bala khana Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017 .....	133
60. Fig. 4. 22. A view of atrium. Source: 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	134
61. Fig. 4. 23. A view of the eastern bala khana with ceiling. Source: 13 Jan 2017.....	134
62. Fig. 4. 24. Small room with western bala khana room 4. Source: 13 Jan 2017.....	135
63. Fig. 4. 25. A view of northern bala khan room 5. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan2017.....	136
64. Fig. 4. 26. View of Cheeni khana on northern side small room attached to the bala khana. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	137
65. Fig. 4. 27. A safe in northern room. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	138
66. Fig. 4. 28. Decorated ceiling of the office room with Khatam bandi. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	139
67. Fig. 4. 29. Frescos in eastern bala khana. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	139
68. Fig. 4. 30. View of eastern bala khana room 7. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	140
69. Fig. 4. 31. Stairs in the kitchen. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	140
70. Fig. 4. 32. Closer view of the well. Source: Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	141

71. Fig. 4. 33. View of the outer broken area. Source: 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	142
72. Fig. 4. 34. Stairs going to the basement. Source: 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	143
73. Fig. 4. 35. Renovated Jharoka140.....	143
74. Fig. 4. 36. Teh khana plan by Khan.....	144
75. Fig. 4. 37. Teh khana plan by Saleem Afzal.....	144
76. Fig. 4. 38. View of windows opening in the central courtyard. Source:14 <sup>th</sup> jan 2017.....	145
77. Fig. 4. 39. View of <i>teh khana</i> with double arches. Source: 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	146
78. Fig. 4. 40. A view of the north tehkhana. Source: 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	147
79. Fig. 4. 41. South tehkhana of Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	147
80. Fig. 4. 42. The beautiful flower decoration, Gandhara influence. Source: 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	148
81. Fig. 4. 43. Plan of the first floor of the haveli by Khan and Saleem .....	149
82. Fig. 4. 44. View of the first floor sitting place. Source: 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	150
83. Fig. 4. 45. A view of arched wall. Source: 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	151
84. Fig. 4. 46. A view of the first floor. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	152
85. Fig. 4. 47. View of first floor ceiling of Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	152
86. Fig. 4. 48. A view of Basta windows with punjali and stain glass. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	153
87. Fig. 4. 49. Sehan takht of first floor. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	154
88. Fig. 4. 50. North bala khana dressing room with small connected room. 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 .....	155
89. Fig. 4. 51. Eastern side of 1 <sup>st</sup> floor. Researcher sketching some details. Source:1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.	155
90. Fig. 4. 52. Southern Dalan. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	156
91. Fig. 4. 53. Door leading to the first floor. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	157
92. Fig. 4. 54. View of <i>kotha</i> . From first floor. Alam Nawaz Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	158
93. Fig. 4. 55. View of the wooden fence. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	158
94. Fig. 4. 56. Details of the inner side of the fence. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	159
95. Fig. 4. 57. Boundary wall of north. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 .....	159



96.	Fig. 4. 58. View of the wall with demolished areas. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	160
97.	Fig. 5. 1. A view of bala khana wood work. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	162
98.	Fig. 5. 2. View of the fine wood used in Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: March 2017.....	163
99.	Fig. 5. 3 (1). Naqqashi in Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 .....	165
100.	Fig. 5. 3. (2). Design replicated by researcher for the understanding of its application .....	165
101.	Fig. 5.4. Another Design replicated by researcher.....	166
102.	Fig. 5. 5. Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli ceiling with dazzling gold and lapis blue still bright. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	168
103.	Fig. 5. 6. A view of Khatam bandi and Naqqashi in Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	169
104.	Fig. 5.7. View of a ceiling of chajja in atrium Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.....	170
105.	Fig. 5. 8. A view of another ceiling. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 ceiling.....	170
106.	Fig. 5. 9. The decorated arch in the Sultan’s Loge at the green Mosque, Bursa Turkey source accessed 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.  <a href="https://www.google.com/search?q=Tiles+at+Green+mosque+bursa+turki&amp;rlz=1">https://www.google.com/search?q=Tiles+at+Green+mosque+bursa+turki&amp;rlz=1</a> .....	172
107.	Persian-tiles at the Shah Sheragh Shrine at Shiraz.Source: accessed 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017. <a href="https://www.google.com/search?q=Persiantiles+at+the+Shah+Sheragh+Shrine+at+Shiraz&amp;rlz=1">https://www.google.com/search?q=Persiantiles+at+the+Shah+Sheragh+Shrine+at+Shiraz&amp;rlz=1</a> .....	172
108.	Fig. 5. 11. Ceiling of eastern bala khana of ground floor. Source: 12 March 2017.....	173
109.	Fig. 5. 12. Representation of star shape in north bala khana room 2 ceiling. Source: 12 March 2017.....	173
110.	Fig. 5.13. Chart showing beginning of design. Source: <i>Les Element de l’ art arabe: le trait des entrelacs</i> . Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title <i>Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design</i> . New York and London, 1973.....	174

111.	Fig. 5. 14. Forming a circle. <i>Les Element de I' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs</i> . Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title <i>Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design</i> . New York and London. 1973.....	175
112.	Fig. 5. 15. Repeating panel with regular shapes. <i>Les Element de I' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs</i> . Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title <i>Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design</i> . New York and London. 1973.....	176
113.	Fig. 5. 16. Most common Islamic Pattern found in Islamic buildings. Source: <i>Les Element de I' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs</i> . Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title <i>Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design</i> .....	178
114.	Fig. 5. 17. Page 10, Islamic- ornamental Design. Source: Claude Humbert.....	182
115.	Fig. 5. 18. A view of Punjali screen room 3 of ground. Source. 1 <sup>st</sup> March 201.....	184
116.	Fig. 5. 19. A scanned panel from Islamic Art. Source: Talbot Rice.....	185
117.	Fig. 5. 20. Detail of Punjali. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	186
118.	Fig. 5. 21. A view of Stained glass window. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	189
119.	Fig. 5. 22. Pencil sketch by Researcher.....	189
120.	Fig. 5. 23. Researcher artist drawing the design of window pane. Source: March 2017.....	190
121.	Fig. 5. 24. Stained glass window. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	190
122.	Fig. 5. 25. Jali Screen or ventilator. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	192
123.	Fig. 5. 26. View of Jali. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	192
124.	Fig. 5. 27. View of Kharbujiya carving of the atrium. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	194
125.	Fig. 5. 28. Detail of Kharbujiya design. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	194
126.	Fig. 5. 29. Detail of Arabesque. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	195
127.	Fig. 5. 30. Detail of Arabesque 2. Source: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017.....	196
128.	Fig. 5. 31. Image showing Mastakkas. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	197
129.	Fig. 5. 32. Detail of pillar. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	197

130.	Fig. 5. 33. Carved attached capital of pillar. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	198
131.	Fig. 5. 34. Drawing by researcher.....	198
132.	Fig. 5. 35. The stained glass roshan dans. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	199
133.	Fig. 5. 36. Sliding roshan dan. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	199
134.	Fig. 5. 37. Eye shaped roshan dan. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	200
135.	Fig. 5. 38. A view of Ling Chi design in the haveli. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	201
136.	Fig. 6. 1. Cheeni khana with aina kari. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	202
137.	Fig. 6. 2. Detail of Gilded stucco and mirror work on Cheeni khana. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	203
138.	Fig. 6. 3. <i>Cheeni khana</i> above a fire place in the center of a room. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	204
139.	Fig. 6. 4. Detail of the painted niche. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	205
140.	Fig. 6. 5. A view of Stucco boarder. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	205
141.	Fig. 6. 6. View of the wall with frescos. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	206
142.	Fig. 6. 7. Decorative bands of fresco around the naqqashi ceiling. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	209
143.	Fig. 6. 8. A view of boarders around a ceiling of a roof in Sethi haveli Karim Bakhsh. Source:25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	210
144.	Fig. 6. 9. Detail of the creeper floral design with intricate motives. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	210
145.	Fig. 6.10. Detail of a delicate design at the verge of destruction, karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017.....	211
146.	Fig. 6. 11. A sample from Khem Bedi Singh haveli Kallar Sayedan Rawalpindi. Source: dec. 31 <sup>st</sup> 2014.....	211
147.	Fig. 6. 12. View of a wall, fresco painting with floral motives. Source: 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2016.....	212

148.	Fig. 6. 13. A view of wood work from the atrium. Source: 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2016.....	214
149.	Fig. 6. 14. A view of Khem Bedi Singh haveli Kallar Sayedan Rawalpindi. Source: Dec 2014.....	215
150.	Fig. 6. 15. Frescos in Khem Bedi Singh haveli. Source: Dec 2014.....	215
151.	Fig. 6. 16. Frescos in Karim Bakhsh haveli. 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017.....	215
152.	Fig. 6. 17. Window Jharoka in Khem Bedi Sigh haveli Kallar Sayedan. Source: Dec 2014.....	216
153.	Fig. 6. 18. Khem Bedi Singh haveli star shape Jali. Source: Dec 2014.....	217
154.	Fig. 6. 19. Star shape Jali in Karim Bakhsh haveli. Source: 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2016.....	217

## Acknowledgements

Research and learning is a constant process that cannot be accomplished without proper guidance to stay on the right track and attain the right goals. I was lucky enough to have many people who provided proper guidance for this research. First of all I would express my modest gratitude towards God for providing me with the best environment for my intellectual growth under the guidance of committed, devoted and dedicated mentors.

The vital role in this research is indeed of my honorable supervisor Dr. Ghani- ur- Rahman without his support this work would not be called a quality research work. I thank Dr. Ghani for being an incredible guide, who always helped me with the beacon of his intellect. I would also thank my teachers, Professor Dr. M. Ashraf Khan, Dr. Razia Sultana and Dr. Hugh Van Skyhawk for detecting the light of research in me and guided me with the appropriate documentation strategies.

I do not have enough words to express my gratitude to my parents. I want to do justice by thanking my father, Sheikh Abdullah and my mother Zainab Khatoon from the core of my heart, who inculcated confidence, and taught me to trust my abilities.

It will be unfair not to mention about the never tiring behavior and help of one person who worked and motivated me to accomplish this research. That is none other than my husband Saleem Afzal Khan, whose support was always there during this research process. He did measurements of all the floors of the haveli and visited other havelis of Peshawar city with me. I specially appreciate my sons Muhammad Safi Saleem and Muhammad Shuja Saleem for editing the thesis and taking the measurement of the haveli.

I am grateful to Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal for reviewing my thesis and giving valuable suggestions. My special thanks to Dr. Abdul Samad, Director Department of Archaeology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr Ahmad Faraz, Mr Alam Nawaz, in charge Sethi haveli, who allowed to visit the Haveli Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi for documentation. In the end I once again thank my supervisor for his constant support and guidance.

## **Dedication**

This humble effort is especially dedicated to my parents, who had been always a source of inspiration for me. They always taught me how to use my abilities honestly, no matter what ever big or small work I do. This dedication note is a small token of thanks from me, for their diligent efforts, which they put in to have a happy and secure future for me.

## INTRODUCTION

This research is based on the documentation of art and architecture of Haveli of Karim Bakhsh Sethi (known as Sethi House or Haveli, by the Department of Archaeology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) near old Tahsil Gor Gathri in Bazar Qallan, Peshawar with the worldview of an artist and art lover. It was noticed during the survey that the area of Qissa Khwani bazaar, going to *Sethi Mohallah* (Sethi Enclave) in Peshawar is overwhelmingly filled with enormous Havelis and buildings. It seems that constructing enormous residential places was a tradition of Peshawar city, because Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who were financially well-off always liked to spend generously on their residential places. The architecture of the subcontinent, especially India and Pakistan has a diverse and rich history, beginning with the Neolithic settlements of Mehrgarh and the Harappan cities of Indus valley civilization, and later the Hindu, Buddhist, Indo- Islamic/Mughal, Colonial and modern periods. Scholarly discourse about the architecture of the Indo-Islamic era (1206-1857), usually focuses on grand works like forts, palaces, mosques gardens and mausoleums constructed by the Mughals (1526- 857). These have been given scholarly attention and have undergone detailed analyses to understand their multiple facets and their physical and philosophical underpinnings (Lynn 2011: 6).

On the other hand, domestic architecture and its development throughout this period has largely been ignored, even though it is more frequently the small scale architecture which embodies vital cultural cues (Sabzwari 2003: 1). Their layout, ornamentation and decorative elements are important indicators of how cultural traditions are made, maintained and passed on. They also recorded the changes in social, cultural, economic and political worldviews of people (Rapoport 1969: 47). Reading buildings as artifacts, through their details provides cultural insights into the processes of design, construction, procurement, and inhabitation (Sharr 2012: 2-8). Therefore, it becomes important to read historic buildings themselves to understand what roles they played within their prevalent cultural and social context. This allows an understanding of how the occupants interacted within the buildings and their exchanges with the outside world in order to maintain traditions, customs and status. The typology, most likely to help develop an

understanding of its occupants is the domestic one, which is built, extended, remodeled and divided as per the changing/evolving needs of its patrons. The growth and changes of the domestic residence represents the patron's world view, desires, needs, values, aspirations and position within their society (Metcalf 2001: 37).

First part of the research is with the main focus on the Sethi family history and their contribution in economic growth of Peshawar with an overview of some other important *Havelis* in the area e.g. Raj Kapoor Haveli, Haveli of Dilip Kumar etc. The second part of dissertation is focused on the documentation of the art and architecture of the Sethi Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh, and its decorative elements as well as its significance other than just a residence. It is the art and architecture of the famous Sethis in Peshawar that made them memorable and commendable up till now. The Sethi Haveli also had some social and business significance along with the residential value of the building. The Haveli was owned by Karim Bakhsh Sethi, who belonged to a Muslim family and had prominent positions in the business of the area. They had certain halls basements and courtyards where some social and business events were held. The area where these are situated must have been chosen by the Sethis for being the center of the business activities, as well as center of the interior city. It has been a common practice at that time that businessmen tried to live near their workplaces. We can notice this in Rawalpindi as well, where the Sikh ruling businessmen had their residences in the center of the city and trade such as Sardar Soojan Singh Haveli in Bhabra bazaar Rawalpindi. Sethi Haveli of Mr. Karim Bakhsh, which is actually a *Zanan Khana*<sup>4</sup> of the actual Haveli is now in the possession of the Archaeology department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar. They have purchased the Haveli in 2006 for a very low price of PKR 16,000,000. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology decided to restore the Haveli. The first work for the restoration and preservation of this important building was done by Architect Yasmeen Lari, CEO Heritage Foundation, who was appointed as the Honorable Project Director by Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in March 2010 and the team has published a survey and a completion of restoration report.

---

<sup>4</sup> A special portion of the Haveli for female in the house or rooms for females.



In spite of the fact that a great number of eminent people belonged to this area, which is known as *Sethi Mohallah*, none of the members of Sethi family or the notable people were able to provide any authentic information. The Sethi family and the locals of the area seemed to be ignorant about the history or actual businesses of the Sethis. It was then decided to research the details about Sethi family and the Sethi with a fresh eye.

A few researchers only documented the building in bits and pieces. One researcher worked on the woodwork designs of the Haveli for her MPhil Thesis. In this research, all the three story plans, material, decorative woodwork, *Cheeni-Khana*,<sup>5</sup> ceilings and fresco paintings have been discussed and documented as an original firsthand information. Presently, the building is reasonably restored under the protection of the Archaeology Department and is open for visitors from all over Pakistan as well as International guests. This documentation of Karim Bakhsh Haveli (*Zanan Khana*) will not only contribute about the condition of the *Havelis* in Peshawar but also provide detailed information about the other *Havelis* of the *Sethi Mohallah*, as all the *Havelis* of Sethis were constructed in the same style in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries using almost the same materials and decorative style of Sikh, Mughals and British period.

It was noticed that the Haveli has a special ventilation and light system that the sky is visible even from the basement of the Haveli. The Sethi Haveli is so well lit and ventilated that it feels like as if special air conditioning system has been applied in the building.

Since this building was constructed by *Sethis*, so without discussing Sethi family's history it will not be possible to understand the financial wellbeing of the owner and his concepts, beliefs and aesthetic sense. Sethis were basically a very religious family, having Sufistic (saintly) thoughts, so whatever they did they did to please *Allah* (God) (unpublished book on Saleem Sethi's father).<sup>6</sup> Before the Independence of Pakistan people from different religions lived with cultural amalgamation, so they liked to participate in the

---

<sup>5</sup> Decorative place in rooms on wall and windows in which small pieces of mirror are used and commonly used to place decorative objects.

<sup>6</sup> A retired civil servant from the Sethi family

religious festivals of other religions (Skyhawk 2008: 131). Similar influence of one another is also observable in the architectural style.

It is said that Sethis were not only true Muslims, but were businessmen with strong religious beliefs guiding their business practices. They spent handsome amounts on works of social importance like construction of Mosques, wells and bridges (Sethi, Yunas 2000: 12).

Premium local and international materials have been used in construction as the owner belonged to the elite class. The courtyard house is a traditional Indian dwelling. Its relevance to culture, environment and social context made it a dominant presence from the Indus valley civilization (c.3300-c.1700BCE) until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The term 'Haveli' is used for the elite urban courtyard house; the concept identifying a house as a Haveli originated in the Mughal era (Jain 2002: 1.1).

This portion known as *Zanan Khana* of Sethi *Haveli* has been discussed in detail because it is a masterpiece of art and construction techniques. The whole complex is like a palace where comfort and luxurious living are combined in a single place. '*Haveli*', derived from a Persian word *Hawli* that means an enclosed place. The basic components of the *Haveli* remain constant and widespread across a larger region from India to central Asia and Iran; this was due to centuries of inter-cultural and economic exchange between India, Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia during the Mughal Empire (1552-1857). The development of urban across the Indian subcontinent are documented from the 16<sup>th</sup> till the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Pramar 2005: 1). However the distinctive style kept changing due to the regional and cultural change. These complexes in their design, emulated the Emperor's palaces constituting the public halls and *mohallahs*, and the private areas of the Hath and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Subcontinent demand service spaces for a large contingents of servants, craftsmen, stables and stores (Hosagrahar 2001: 26- 45). These Haveli complexes were large enough to form small *Mohallahs* (neighborhood) and acted as landmarks of the surrounding environment. The ownership of large *Havelis* became a status symbol as it supports a particular way of life based on traditions (Tillotson 1998).

The Subcontinent *umarah*<sup>7</sup> saw a decline by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as the British control of India saw the decline and downfall of the Mughal Empire and its dependents. The resultant political and economic changes forced the *umarah* to abandon or sell their homes (Hosagrahar 2005: 23). The 19<sup>th</sup> century rise of the merchants and money lenders (bankers) was due to their role as the new power brokers; as they supported first, the East India Company and later the British Crown financially. These merchants were highly involved in the Western trade and Central Asian trade, which brought cultural, economic and political exchanges in India, so they became a new elite class of the region (Dale 1994: 3-6).

The merchants replaced or filled the vacant place of Mughal *umarah* and built the decorative *Havelis* from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hardgrove 2002: 323-34).

The merchants gradually became the new *rais*<sup>8</sup> of the land and filled the physical and social space in society left by Mughal *umarah*, as Mughal *Havelis* were a status symbol of the rich in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. These were replaced by the houses of merchants. The production of a rich and opulent domestic architecture via trade portrays the cultural manifestation of the periods of socio economic and political strength experienced by the merchants (king 2013: 41).

The lifestyle that had prompted the development and the continual use of the *Havelis* changed and the maintenance and the upkeep of the *Havelis* became impossible. Resultantly the *Havelis* were divided into smaller parts. The decline of the that took place from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is thus linked to cultural changes in the late colonial period which saw the patronage of new typology of the suburban bungalow over the urban *Haveli* and it was then inspired by International style (Prasad 1988: 1-7).

The other structures located in the vicinity of the specific *Sethi Haveli* of Haji Karim Bakhsh will be discussed with for the purpose of comparison. These are very much similar to each other in style of

---

<sup>7</sup> Rich and famous people

<sup>8</sup> Rich since generations

construction and decoration. The *Sethi* clan followed these trade patterns; moving from *Bhera* to *Chamkani* and to Peshawar in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Sethi 2004: 16).

This Haveli was taken over by the Archaeology Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2006 and the 1st restoration and preservation work was carried on in 2010. The flaws of preservation have also been discussed. Mural paintings that have been washed away for restoration on the same place has not yet been done. As mentioned in an unpublished project by Dr. Shaukat Mahmood, restoration is a very technical work which means that the building should be restored with spirit and technical skills so that the originality of the structure is not damaged. But unfortunately, there are always some unwanted additions made by the restoration teams that damage the true spirit of the building. The points that could have helped to restore the building in a more close to original form have also been discussed.

#### **Research problem:**

Research problem is the documentation of Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli documentation. The research requires opening a window to the past, to discover how the owners of this *Haveli* artistically spent money on the decoration of the building. This research will also prove, that the people vanish as the natural process of death terminates their existence, but their names sometimes live on forever as they are remembered by the works they do. This research is based on the documentation and finding of historical evidences related to the Sethi in general, and the *Zanan Khana* of Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli in particular. These decorative elements have some symbolic value and use of Islamic design in the *Haveli* has association with deeper Sufistic approach.

Frequent visits to the Haveli disclosed that the preservation and restoration of the Karim Bakhsh Haveli especially top floor or rooftop is so poorly done that the plaster applied on the walls has chipped off during the recent earthquake in October 2015. The roofs of the *Sethi* Haveli are at the verge of destruction, owing to the bad quality of restoration. Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli is of immense historic importance, and so it is imperative to document the remaining areas of the *Haveli*, especially art and architecture. The restoration

team of Miss Lari tried to work on all areas of the *Haveli* but continuity in conservation and restoration process is a must, to stop more decay of the building. The dissertation is focused on the architecture material, style of construction, mural paintings, painted ceilings and woodwork of the *Haveli*. The decorated walls of different rooms of the *Haveli*; will be analyzed along with the architecture, material and significance of other structures which were a part of this huge complex known as Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi *Haveli*.

The Sethi merchants, bankers of Peshawar represent the historic transformation in the Indian society from the late Mughal to the colonial period (1800-1910). These dating are from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the repositories of social, political and cultural values of the various historic eras (Khan 2016: 4).

The area of research is an overview of the Havelis in Peshawar with a case study of History, Art and Architecture of Haji Karim Bakhsh Haveli in Peshawar.

The research has been focused on the following points.

- History of Peshawar.
- Significance of *Havelis* and some important *Havelis* of Peshawar.
- History of *Sethi* family.
- Business of the *Sethis*.
- Architectural style used for the construction with focus on Karim Bakhsh *Sethi Haveli*.
- Ceilings, Mural work, woodwork done, with main focus on Karim Bakhsh *Sethi Haveli* Peshawar.
- Importance of restoration of the heritage and its use in creating a link with tolerance and acceptability.
- My few published papers on other significant *Havelis* of Rawalpindi and Peshawar with special emphasis on the art and architecture. This research and multiple physical visits to the *Havelis* in Peshawar persuaded me for this in depth study of the Art and Architecture of Sethi Haveli Peshawar.

### **Significance of the research:**

This research intends to uncover the regional, social and cultural importance of the *Sethis* from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their significance as leaders of trade and commerce, along with the beauty of the Sethi *Haveli* as a dwelling. The present condition and negligence of the people residing in the *Haveli* has also been discussed as well as the decorative elements and comfort of the architecture. This is actually the main reason for the dilapidation of the structure. The dearth of knowledge about the history and importance by the owners is the main reason for the endangered building known as Sethi Havelis (Khan 2015: 1-4). This research is analytical as far as the decorative elements documentation is concerned. It will open new horizons for future researchers to search and rediscover the objectives of decoration in the *Haveli*.

### **The main objectives are as follows:**

- The main objective of this research is to document the building, and to find the present condition of the art and architecture of *Haveli* with the eye of an artist and art enthusiast.
- To analyze the decorative elements in the building specially use of Islamic motives in the building and their spiritual importance.
- Physical visits to Peshawar to monitor the amount of decay in the buildings for the purpose of documentation.
- To find similarities and differences in the *Haveli* architecture of Peshawar with a *Sikh Haveli* in District Rawalpindi.
- To analyze the architecture and material of *Sethi Haveli* in Peshawar with the rare work of craftsmen who almost disappeared with the passage of time.
- To analyze Mural paintings, ceilings, woodwork, *Cheeni khanas* and stained glass windows and doors with their technique.

**Research question:**

The research problem is to find the social, commercial and business value of this *Sethi Haveli* along with the *Sethi* family and its impacts on the art and architecture of the Sethi Havelis. The researcher has tried to fill the research gap created by the accessible published and verbal sources. The people who are still residing in other *Sethi Havelis* had witnessed the time when this *Haveli* was in perfect living condition. To compare the information provided by the local people with the available lesser amount of published sources about the history was a tedious and hard job. The present *Sethi Haveli* in possession of Archaeology Department has an architectural style which is modern even after almost more than 100 years of its construction. This building is going to be recorded for the first time in detail with the world view of an artist. This research may bring this idea to the Archaeology Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Ministry of Culture and Heritage to utilize it in a more creative way. There are many *Havelis* in this area, but none of them is so rich in the decoration as far as wood work, Mural paintings, painted ceilings, Cheeni khanas and use of coloured glass in the windows and doors is concerned. This *Haveli* is also important, because of the influential situation of the *Sethi* family and the owner's sincere affiliation with religion and conducting business in a more religious way by dedicating sufficient amount for social welfare. The role of *Sethis* in the development of the residential buildings of the region and its impact on the residences of rich people in general will also be discussed.

**Previous research:**

Karim Bakhsh *Haveli* has been documented partially by the restoration and conservation team of Miss Yasmeen Lari in 2010, with a restoration report that was published in Project News March 29, 2012.

The demolition of the non-historic portion that had been built some time in 1950s, had been carried out, which has cleared the area in the front of the house as a forecourt. The work on the brick wall in the rear to stabilize the neighbor's wall was partially completed.

(<http://www.heritagefoundationpak.org/mi/3/Peshawar-Heritage>). This work is being carried out in collaboration with the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The thesis work of previous researchers on some areas of Sethi Haveli has also been consulted during present research.

### **Original contribution:**

This research is an original contribution from the point of view of an artist or painter and a true lover of art and old architecture. This endangered building is at the point of dilapidation, so it is a creative and original approach with which this *Haveli* has been looked upon and documented with a new zeal. Original designs of ceilings and frescos have been replicated by the researcher to reach the originality of the design and use of colours by the *Haveli* craftsmen. The greatest constraint in the research was non availability of material sources or published sources. Even the oral sources cannot be considered hundred percent correct but it helped a little in finding the facts about the *Haveli*.

There is a lack of comprehensive study of *Mohallah* residences. One of the original studies includes PEPAC documentation of Lahore city which documents some of the remaining of old city. The study falls short in studying the *Haveli* designs, their significance and their role within the *Mohallah* or the city. The *Mohallahs* of Sindh have been documented by Sabzwari and her book is an important guide for the knowledge of southern region (Sabzwari 2003). Hardgrove has also recorded that the merchant's architecture that could have provided a primary source of investigation has not been documented much, he notes that, "the domestic architecture of commercial groups in India is a fascinating area of research, although admittedly much less studied than other forms' specially the religious architecture of prominent temples, mosques and mausoleum like the *Taj Mahal*, or various ruling elites". The merchant have taken very little attention of the scholars as compared to Mughal and *Sikh* (review report 2001). Indian mercantile history has been extensively covered by scholars like Dale, Levi and Bayly which describes the areas social and cultural history (Bayly 1983: 50-53). The other fact is that the mercantile patronage of architecture, which provides



an important primary source for understanding the merchant bankers activities, has not received much investigation (Patel 2012: 139- 164).

Although a few researchers have tried to contribute in bits and pieces in the knowledge about *Mohallah Sethian Havelis* but it will indeed be an original contribution in the area of the art and architecture of the *Haveli*. In this research, not only the cultural, social and business contexts will be reported but a special emphasis will be given to its decorative element for which drawings, paintings and photographs will enhance the aesthetic beauty of the *Haveli* and implementation of design in wood carving, ceiling painting along with wall painting in the *Haveli*.

#### **Mitigation tools and limitations in the study:**

It is imperative to study the values, beliefs, institutions, and social organizations of the society in the *Sethi Mohallah* to have a better understanding of the built environment (King 1976: xii). A brief portion of research is related to the other prominent *Havelis* along with *Sethi havelis*. It was difficult to manage and enter the other *Havelis*, as they were either dilapidated or the owners had a non-cooperative behavior. However, the main case study the *Haveli* of Haji Karim Bakhsh was approached easily because we acquired written permission from the director of tourism and archaeology KPK to visit the *Haveli* for the purpose of research. It was easy to look at the *Haveli* and draw the plans of each floor of the *Haveli* with fresh measurement and designs were copied and repainted on paper for better understanding.

Some of the portions of the *Haveli* under discussion had a fragile fabric even after the restoration, because either it was poor restoration or the earthquakes destroyed the reconstructed parts. There were altogether twelve, out of which, seven are surviving with small, major or minor changes. Some have been totally replaced by new style of architecture.

The major constrains were non-availability of or very poor archival material in Peshawar, weak cataloging system and inconclusive records was one of the constraints in research. Due to use of Indigenous terms,

Importance of glossary is inevitable because the structure belongs to Mughal period so most terms are from Persian and Urdu.

In general the research will be interesting for common man as well as scholars and researchers.

### **Research tools:**

Daily Notes on field diary, field tools, report writing and cataloguing, sketch book, paints, brushes (for replication of designs), camera, measuring tape, maps and audio recorder.

A field diary is always an important tool in documentation. This is used for on-spot documentation and note taking of the oral information or interviews. It helped a lot in analyzing the information gathered during the field trip. Field diary also helps in any type of anthropological or science research but helps mostly in the documentation of a building. Daily diary is always helpful for recording the places or events on a daily basis as it is important for Anthropologists and Archaeologists.

The research had two major areas, and had to deal with in Peshawar and the main case study of Karim Bakhsh *Sethi Haveli* in Peshawar. The need for Maps was unavoidable because some were in Qissa Khwani Bazar Peshawar and some were in other thickly populated areas.

Plan making is very important in documenting a building. Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli is quite rich in its Art and Architecture, the use of camera was of great help. With the use of a camera the areas that remained hidden to the eye were made visible through the eye of the camera.

Audio recorder was a great tool used for recording oral information by the people who had witnessed the times when this Haveli was in perfect living condition.

### **Research methodology:**

The primary source for present research is the *Sethi Haveli* itself. There has been a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the building itself. All the internal and external features have been discussed in detail like plans, elevations and materials utilized in the construction. The historiography of nonwestern

architecture (Asia, Africa, Fareast etc.) is about hundred years old and fairly now compared with centuries of research and analysis of Western Architecture (Hillenbrand 2003: 1-8).

To have a clear understanding of the building in discussion it was important to study a contextual historical building of the period. Primary, secondary and tertiary sources were used to look upon the macro and micro variable architectural details of *Haveli Zanan khana*. Although planes of the *Zanan khana* were already available by some researchers but they were freshly measured by Saleem Afzal Khan (husband). However paintings, drawings complimented with photographs, archival records also helped in this research for creating a clearer picture of this dilapidating structure. However, the researcher has to be quite flexible in such researches due to insufficient historic evidences.

**The research is organized as follows:**

- Historical Documentation Objectives
- Research Design
- Methods
- Integrating Results
- Reporting Results
- Recommended Sources of Technical Information

**Documentation objectives:**

The documentation is based on detailed record, in written form, of the history to justify the significance of the building with immense artwork. Historical research is generally based on documentation by using archival materials, oral history techniques, ethno histories and prior research contained in secondary sources and personal observation of the building to make a detailed record of previously identified questions and investigate latest particular questions about the established significance of a property. An investigative technique has been employed to document associative, architectural, cultural or informational values of *Sethi Haveli* with focus on art and decorative designs. Research based documentation has been used as a

component of structural recording, archeological investigation, to interpret and mitigate the anticipated loss of a property through conservation of its historical, architectural or archeological significance to some extent. It has been recorded with its present restored form and the original documentation. Existing documentation generally resulted in both greater factual knowledge about the specific *Sethi Haveli* and its values and in better understanding of the property in its historical context. This documentation will help increasing factual knowledge about a *Haveli*, its significance in one historical context, and its value as a palace where art and design has been given importance by the owner.

Documentation will incorporate the findings of previous researches and it will help find relationship among several buildings of Peshawar of the same type in same time period. The purpose is to document in greater detail the aesthetic contexts of the property. The questions will be investigated to understand the social, artistic and architectural significance.

### **Research Design**

Research is designed to document work and to define a set of prospects based on the available information prior to this research. Generally, the research design also ensures that research methods are corresponding with the type, quality and source of expected information. The research design will identify in evaluating significance of the property and historical, architectural, archeological or cultural issues relevant to the evaluated significance of the property; previous research on the issues and existing knowledge will be utilized.

Research design is based on detailed documentation of the *Sethi Haveli* with special focus on artistic elements e.g. richly decorated ‘Cheeni Khanas’ or reception rooms where decorative pieces are displayed.

Various layers of crafts including ‘aina-kari’<sup>9</sup>, ‘manabat-kari’<sup>10</sup> and ‘kashi-kari’<sup>11</sup> painting and splendid wood carving of doors, windows and arches were used for the decoration.

While previous research is based on all the architectural elements from the point of view of restoration and conservation, this documentation will be different, with a focus on detailed description of decorative elements along with the architectural aspects.

Information has been gathered to produce reliable historical analyses. The main problem about this *Sethi Haveli* and *Sethi* family is that there are no documented evidences available about the original history of *Sethi* family, which is the biggest constraint in progress of authentic research. The only reliable authentic source is the report of the restoration team and an unpublished book of Mr. Younas Sethi about *Sethi* family, known as *Peshawar ka Sethi Khandan*.

Research design will be based on self-observation and locating such members of the Sethi family who have some solid authentic information related to the building. In this regard the greatest achievement was to meet with Mr Saleem Sethi,<sup>12</sup> who provided an unpublished book by his father that revealed a lot of facts about the family history.

### **Use of Sources:**

The variety of available written, graphic materials and individuals has been used as sources, including but not limited to personal records. The research design has been developed around interviews of individuals and secondary source materials.

---

<sup>9</sup> In which a craftsman creates a beautiful shining space in a building with cut mirrors in various forms.

<sup>10</sup> In which a craftsman creates a beautiful shining space in a building with cut mirrors in various forms.

<sup>11</sup> Method of hand painting ceramic products, in particular tiles and pottery.

<sup>12</sup> A retired Civil Servant from the Sethi family residing in Islamabad

The research has been developed around deciding the right source materials in finding the needed information and at what point in the research process that information will be most valuable. Most often secondary sources are valuable for gathering background information, while primary sources are more useful to gather or confirm specific facts. The documentation goals are not used to acquire comprehensive investigation of sources but research is kept cost-effective by the timely and careful use of particular sources.

This *Haveli* documentation resulted in finding and understanding the loss of this property or many other properties. However it was important to gather information from local archival sources and oral histories before restoration activities destroy or disperse family or community records and residents. In case of *Sethi Haveli* unfortunately it was very difficult to look for family members of *Sethi Haveli* with authentic information. The historiography of Indian architecture is largely on the writings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century British scholars (Panicker 2008: 34). Extensive work of survey and documentation was done by James Fergusson from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. His purpose was to classify and present the vast range and character of India's architectural heritage. His work was published in *History of India and eastern Architecture* (1876), (Metcalf 1984: 37-65). But his analysis proved to be based on his European training (Tillotson 2014: 4).

To maintain accuracy of structural Analysis plans of all the three floors were freshly measured and the measurements were found correct in the plans used by Dr. Samra Mohsin Khan. It was then decided to use these in this research in comparison to the new ones with addition numbers allotted to rooms.

Building plans and architectural renderings may not reflect a structure as it was actually built but they are quite close.

All the photographs were freshly taken by the researcher using a professional camera and drawings and paintings of some decorative designs and wood work were also made for better understanding of the aesthetic concepts of the *Haveli*.

#### **Analysis:**

The focus is not only on the issues defined in the research design, but the new issues have also been explored during the research process and analyzed. New important issues have been raised that were not previously considered before gathered documentation. Further investigation may prove to be essential, particularly when contradictory information has been gathered, such as about the owners.

Based on the available sources judgment has been made, weighing their biases. Conflicts of source materials have been noted. Tentative conclusion about the information has been made after general peer review and consultation with other knowledgeable individuals.

### **Analytical drawings and paintings:**

Understanding the historic buildings by John King helped a lot in using drawing methods for the understanding of historic buildings for the purpose of documentation.

Plans of all the floors are freshly measured to provide a comprehensive understanding of the *Haveli*. However, the researcher has described and explained the plans in a way that is comprehensible for a layman as well as a scholar or researcher who has knowledge of mapping and planning. Although these plans are self-explanatory.

All the sections of the *Haveli* whether they were for private use or for social or business use were explained with all the details of doors and windows.

The courtyard's elevations are also made to understandable and its purpose and importance either social or residential is explained. This style of drawing depicts each element from an angle that emphasizes its purpose and significance as a whole, as well as expressing the viewer's experience of the three dimensionality of the space, an aspect used extensively in Mughal era paintings (15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century) of architectures (Tillotson 1997: 59-79). These plans will give a feeling of physical experience of viewing the *Haveli* to all.

Few detailed drawings of the wood work, fresco paintings and colored mosaic windows and ceiling designs have been done for creating a picture of being there.

The added factor of the research is the utilization of the painting ability of the researcher who is an artist that will help the viewers to have a better understanding of some features to provide them a feeling of being in the location with the artist.

The *Haveli Zanan khana* is overwhelmingly filled with the ceiling painting and fresco paintings as an essential part of this residence of *Sethi*. The painted designs have been repainted on paper with poster colors to make the enlargement of basic design applied in the ceilings of the *Haveli* and floral motives used on the walls of the *Haveli*.

### **Interviews:**

Personal Interviews are always a great help in the documentation of a building. Communication ethics were kept in mind by the researcher while gathering information and creating a link between very few documented sources and the oral information through interview.

During this interview process sometimes it was hard to extract the real facts because of the laxity of the owners. But I must appreciate two people, who really helped in finding a link between facts and stories related to *Sethi*. Number one is Mr Saleem Sethi, who in a very friendly environment replied to all the questions related to *Sethi Haveli* and *Sethi* family and also provided some informative books related to their family history that helped immensely in understanding the actual character of the *Sethi* family and their religious attitude. Sometimes passersby's helped and tried to reply some of the questions with authentic answers.



The second person is Shahrukh Khan's (Indian film star) cousin Mansoor Ahmad<sup>13</sup> who provided lot of oral information about Shahrukh Khan, his family and Peshawar and its culture in general.

### **Integrating results:**

Planning the research using the best available information and the result of documentation has been incorporated into the planning process. All the freshly collected information is first assessed against the research design to establish that it will meet the defined objectives of the research. Then the pertinent historic contexts, property type, and treatment goals for those contexts have been adjusted, as necessary, based on the historical documentation results.

Sources of facts or analyses have been provided in an authentic way, so that future researchers can reach the information in its original context. The individual performing the documentation interpreted these conflicts.

Major analyses and results are discussed including conclusions regarding all major research issues identified in the research design, as well as important issues that rose in the course of research. The analysis has been summarized in terms of its impact on interpreting the property's significance and expanding or altering the knowledge about the property and its context.

It is important to make results of historic documentation available for use in preservation planning and by the general public. Report formats may vary, depending on the audience and the probable uses of the documentation. [http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_5.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_5.htm)

This research would be conducted on documentation of the building and its comparison with the other such buildings in the area. The major source of the research is going to be the physical analysis of the construction, and references will be used from the books which deal with the documentation of other such

---

<sup>13</sup> He is presently living in the same vicinity in Peshawar and has great knowledge regarding Peshawar and Sethi family and other significant Havelis in Peshawar

buildings in the area of Indo Pak, subcontinent. In this research importance will be given to art and architecture of the Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli, which makes this building distinguished to other such buildings. Especially the Murals on the walls of the Haveli are based on the style of Mughal miniature paintings. The ceilings and murals along with the woodwork and stained glass work have been analytically been looked upon and compared to other Havelis that have the same art and architecture.

Art and architecture has a strong connection with the world view of both architects and artists. Generally speaking, art is always used to support a buildings purpose, in a way it helps the users of the structure for special significance. If we specifically talk about Hindu and Sikh architecture in Rawalpindi, their buildings have certain mural decoration in the buildings to support the religious or secular purpose of the building. So is the case with *Sethi Haveli* in Peshawar, which is significant for its socio-economic and secular use. The decorative art of this *Haveli* is versatile in terms of wood work, window mosaics, wall paintings, Cheeni Khanas and painted ceilings. Geometrical and floral motives are painted on the walls of the *Haveli*. To compare the technique of painting the book “Rajput paintings” have been a great help, which gave a deep insight to the technique and material of Rajput paintings, and it is almost the same theme and style that has been used in the murals of Khem Bedi Singh *Haveli* at Kaller Sayedan Rawalpindi.

It was indeed a pre-requisite to understand the motivated belief of the owner before doing research about a *Haveli* definitely reflect their love for decorated walls whether with frescos or with *Cheeni khanas*. An unpublished book by Mr Yunas Sethi provided a detailed study about the history, economic and religious beliefs of the *Sethi* family.

The dissertation is focused on the *Sethis* of Peshawar. So it was inevitable to do research without having fairly good knowledge about Peshawar. Gazetteer of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and an unpublished book by Mr. Yunas Sethi and many other books collectively guided about District Peshawar. Its geography, climate, culture, history and the details about the construction material available in Peshawar were of great importance. All have provided a guideline to write and do research about *Haveli* buildings in Peshawar.

Primary and secondary sources of data Collection are based on the scholarly articles available on architecture of Peshawar by different writers.

#### **Collection of field data:**

Analysis of wood, painting material, architecture material, mirror work and *Khatam Bandi* has been conducted systematically with the help of experts by collected field data during frequent visits of Peshawar. Photography was done very systematically, which helped in making catalogues of the available material. This research would have never shown a true purpose and significance of the Haveli without the Interviews of the local people and the important personalities of the area, who really witnessed the Architecture, when it was in perfect condition.

#### **Compilation of the thesis:**

After all the above mentioned personal efforts, it became possible to represent this research in shape of a proper thesis.

The thesis is structured on the cultural, social and financial position of the owners. The international influential impact on the *Haveli* Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi is also taken care of by keeping in mind the owners extensive travel history and financial wellbeing.

#### **Broader study:**

The *Havelis* of Peshawar have methodically been studied to provide a background for the detailed study of the actual Haveli. That includes detailed study of economic, cultural, social, and political developments in the region of Peshawar. This takes us to the development in the domestic architecture of the area of Peshawar by the Sethis.

#### **Chapter 1: Geographical and historical background of Peshawar:**

After introduction, Chapter 1 deals with the geography and history of its surrounding areas. This study builds a context to the adjacent areas of the city and their impact on the cultural and ethnic development of

the area. It also deals with the regional exchange in the area with Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Russia. This is a general exchange but also it specifies with the exchange of the Sethi merchant family of the Peshawar.

The historical background is also looked upon in this chapter that how the culture of Peshawar developed through its cultural amalgamation with the other surrounding regional boundaries. A relevant context has been created for the study of Karim Bakhsh *Sethi* Haveli and utilization of influences from the surrounding.

### **Chapter 2: Significant *Havelis* of Peshawar:**

The thesis deals with the physical study of the other significant *Havelis* of Peshawar, especially near *Bazar-i-Qallan* and *Qissa khuani bazar*. The city is filled with enormous *Havelis* of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century construction pattern related to Mughal, Sikh and colonial period. It has also been studied with reference to the influences of various *Havelis* on each other in the decoration and general architectural plan. By looking at these *Havelis* it becomes easy to understand that how the people of Peshawar adopted the influences of other cultures. Peshawar's relationship with the residential houses and *bazaars* helped in creating small affiliated *mohallahs* in the surrounded areas. But later Peshawar saw a reordering of its public space during colonial era with a fashionable introduction of enclaves.

### **Chapter 3: History of *Sethi* Family:**

It was actually very difficult to reach the actual history of *Sethi* family. But I was able to contact Mr. Saleem Sethi son of Mr Yunas Sethi who was generous enough to provide me with a book on the history of *Sethi* family. *Sethi* family had been a part of numerous political, cultural and business activities in Peshawar. They also became a part of public philanthropy. The whole history of *Sethi* family starting from their movement from Chamkani<sup>14</sup> is looked upon with detail in this chapter that leads to their development and love for constructed elite houses.

---

<sup>14</sup> A place near Peshawar

#### **Chapter 4: Sethi Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi:**

This chapter includes the introduction to the area of *Qallan Bazar*, near *Gor Gathri* and *Qissa Khwani*. The material used in the construction of the *Haveli* has also been analyzed and discussed in detail. My earliest visits to this *Haveli* were only intended to appreciate the physical beauty of the building, but very soon, by second and third visit, I realized that in order to save the *Haveli* for future researchers from the field of art and architecture it needs to be documented and looked upon with the eye of an artist. The physical visits every time opened new vistas of seductive beauty and something original was noticed that should be given importance not only for the purpose of restoration in future but also for the layman's interest who started to visit the *Haveli* as it was under the possession of archaeology department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In the second half of chapter 4, this analysis encompasses the photographs of each and every corner with detail and drawings and paintings were done to give a wider view of how the Mughal, central Asian, and other influences were adopted in the construction and decoration strategies. The purpose was to cater the needs of a joint family system which can be seen in other *Sethi Havelis* in *Kucha*<sup>15</sup> *Sethian* Peshawar. The plans were drawn after measurement of all the three stories. It has also been documented that the original design of the *Haveli* was much different than the present design; especially the facade is totally different as it used to be in the beginning. But unfortunately there are no documented records of the *Haveli* as it used to be only some oral sources provide information about it.

#### **Chapter 5: Woodwork, ceilings, windows and Islamic design of the Haveli Haji Karim Bakhsh:**

This chapter deals with the detailed analysis of the wood work in the *Haveli*. As we all know that Haji Karim Bakhsh *Haveli* shines like a jewel in the heart of Peshawar mainly due to its splendid woodwork, however it is said that it was added later on when *Sethi* family started their wood business. Glass mosaics will be looked upon to find out the roots and the sources for these decorative elements. One of the most original works is the *khatam bandi* ceilings of the *Haveli* that has no match to any other building. The use

---

<sup>15</sup> Street especially in the interior of thickly populated areas of the city

of Islamic motives is a common practice in the Haveli as a whole. They have been discussed in detail in this chapter.

### **Chapter 6: Cheeni khanas, fresco paintings and comparison with a Sikh Haveli in Rawalpindi**

This chapter is focused on my special interest that is painting. The history of Fresco painting with focus on technique and application of design has been discussed. Since the main focus of the research is on art and architecture the most fascinating *Cheeni khanas* has also been discussed in detail.

The comparison with a *Sikh Haveli* from Rawalpindi has opened interesting windows in the way for future researchers. The similarities and differences in art and architecture of Subcontinent further highlighted the influences and trends prevailing in the area. There is a constant love for Islamic pattern that can be seen in the Haji Karim Bakhsh *Haveli*. This comparative study will definitely reveal some facts for the lovers of these domestic buildings. They will definitely find some similarities and differences that open new directions for future researchers.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter will conclude the research in a manner fascinating for the art lovers who take interest in decorated dwellings of Mughal era. It has also been concluded how comfort and aesthetic taste of the *Sethis* made these Haveli worth for the viewers in general and people who are related to Art in particular. The Mughal and later *Sikh* and British elements of decoration have been mingled in a very creative way in this Haveli.

It can be said with confidence that with the help of all methods of research applied researcher was able to extract true information from the sources available. This research is not only interesting for scholars but it is equally interesting for a common ma

## CHAPTER 1

### GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PESHAWAR

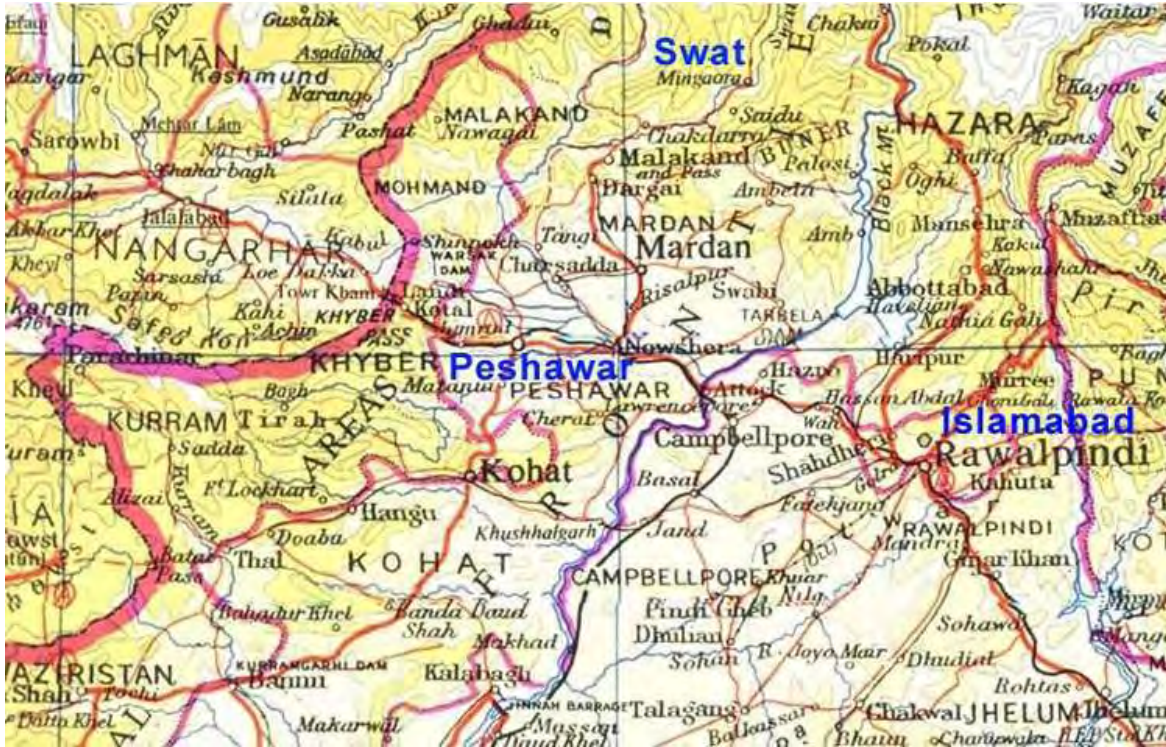


Fig.1.1 Map of Peshawar. [https://www.google.com.pk\\_M%3A](https://www.google.com.pk_M%3A)

#### 1. 1. Name, Geography and History of Peshawar:

Majority of Indian towns are influenced by a combination of major travel routes, nearby rivers, commercial centers, the *jamia*<sup>16</sup> mosque and the citadel (Karan 1957: 70-75). Before shedding light on the *Mohallah Sethian* of Peshawar and especially on Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* it is important and appropriate to trace back the History and Geography of Peshawar, where this charismatic building was created. Cities are often shaped up by the physical conditions of the site, political and cultural system of the inhabitants and

<sup>16</sup> Congregational mosque where special prayers of Friday and Eid are performed

principles of the ruling group of the empire (Keene 2015: 8-21). They are generally considered a product of history having multiple layers of economic, social and political thoughts.

The researcher was not able to know the original name of Peshawar, however, all agree at this point that Peshawar has been known by different names during different periods of history. The present name, Peshawar- Pishore or Pikhawar (by locals) is the modified form of the Persian words, Peshawar from Peshawar, thought to be given by the people coming from Kabul, Durranies or Mughals.

Alexander Cunningham attributed this name to Emperor Akbar,<sup>17</sup> before that the city was known as Parashawar, the meaning was not known. But Abul Fazal<sup>18</sup> mentioned in his court chronicle four various names of the same word. He mentioned these names in *Akbar Naamah* as i) *Purshapura*; ii) *parashawar*; iii) *Pishawar*, and Peshawar (Nadiem 2007: 68).

The consistent influences in the region have been Achaemenian, Sasanians and later Persian tradition and culture; it may be inspired by *Pushkakalavati* near Charsada, which is 30 kilometers from Peshawar. It is also traditionally believed that the name of the city was *Parashpur*- the city of the Persians.

The first Mughal King Babar writes it Parashawar in Babar Namah. Al-Beruni uses two names in *Al-Berunies India*, *Parashawar* and *Purshur*.

The famous Chinese pilgrims do not agree on any of the names or spellings: Fa-Hien (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) mentioned it as Fo-lo-sha, and Hieun Tsang (around middle of 7<sup>th</sup> century), wrote it as Po-lu-sha-po-lo.

Most scholars however tend to believe the name as *Purshapura* on the hypothesis based on historical fact that the region remained under the influences of Achaemenians and Sasanians for a long time. The oldest mention of the name is traced in Kharoshti inscription found at Ara near Attock, which dates back to year 41 of Kanishka, 119 AD. Stein now rejects the *Purshapura* in favor of *Poushpa* from Sanskrit word *Pushpa*

---

<sup>17</sup> The famous Mughal king

<sup>18</sup> He was a Persian poet and scholar of late medieval India. In 1588, he became the Malik-ush-Shu'ara (poet laureate) of Akbar's Court.



meaning flower. Babar has also mentioned Peshawar as the city of flowers. All the above names are the variants of one and the same name. The Persians have also enjoyed strong influence in this region. Some historians record that the name is derived from a Persian word “*Peshawardan*” (Dani 1969: 3). According to Cunningham, the credit for the present name Peshawar goes to Akbar’s innovative nature. Therefore, following are the variant names used for the city until it reached the final name, Peshawar, which is commonly used today.

1. *Parashapur*
2. *Parashawar*
3. *Peshawar*
4. *Pishawar*

After the Hindu age, the Iranians called this region in their language as “*Paruparaesanna*”, meaning land beyond the mountains. But by the Persians time, the local name Gandhara became more popular in the inscriptions of Darius and his successors, and he also brought an end to the local rulers of *Pushkalavati* and moved to the eastern side the mountains (Nadiem 2007: 70). So according to ancient history the ancient Hindu name for Peshawar valley appears to be Gandhara. This name was derived from the colonization of Arians in India, an earlier occupant of the area (Cunningham 1898:15).

This name Gandhara appears in Sanskrit literature from the earliest times and is employed by the Chinese pilgrims of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. The ancient capital of the district was *Pushkalavati*, a city has been founded by *Pushkara*, the son of *Bharata*.

In later times, *Pushkalavati* was famous for a large stupa erected at the spot where Buddha was said to have made alms – offering of his eyes. Chinese pilgrims of the fifth and sixth and seventh centuries also spoke in favor of the version. The city was described in the travelogue of Fa Hian, a Chinese pilgrim in A.D. 400 (Peshawar Gazetteer 2004: 42). Prior to the development of the Peshawar, the principal exit was from the *Serai Jahan Ara (Gor Gathri)* to the Qissa Khawani bazaar. The original layout of the Grand Trunk Road from Lahore entered the city from *Lahori Darwaza* on the eastern side, then passed through

or around the *Serai Jahan Ara (Gor Gathri)*. This road continued till *chowk Bazazan* and the Mahabat Khan mosque where it turned southwards to enter the Qissa Khwani bazaar and then westwards to reach the Kabul *Darwaza*. Both gates mark the oldest entrance and exit and route for travelers to the city (Khan 2016: 79).

## **GEOGRAPHY OF PESHAWAR:**

### **1.2. Geographical and Historical Background of Peshawar:**

A study of Islamic cities started in 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to which, an oriental vision of the Islamic city showed up, which called their planning as irrational (Neglia 2008: 3-46). Many authors described the development of the general point of reference for cities that were actually widely differentiated in terms of cultural and geographical areas (Abu-Lughod 1987: 155-176). The physical pattern is in narrow streets living quarters around a courtyard (Al-Hathloul 1981). The structure of Islamic cities was also largely attributed to religious factors (Hakim 2010: 20-24). The city's architecture was considered to be a powerful signifier of the inner working of the Islamic culture in which building forms, plans and urban layouts were seen as reflective of society's religious aspirations (Samizay 1990). The Islamic cities are however, quite diverse due to religious and cultural amalgamation (Raymond 2008: 40- 70). Islamic city as a generalized scheme deriving from the observation of specific urban structures (mosque, citadel and souk) which then become the city of Peshawar, lies in the western end of Khyber Pass is the first Indian city on the Grand Trunk Road. It has historically served as a major corridor for invaders, traders, monks, travelers, adventurers and pilgrims from Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan into India (Bell 2014: 1366).

Peshawar is considered as the most ancient living city in Pakistan on the right bank of the old Bara River, a tributary to Kabul and 15 kilometers away from Khyber Pass. Dr. Nadiem says in his book that Peshawar is situated at an altitude of 84. 2' and longitude 71.3'.

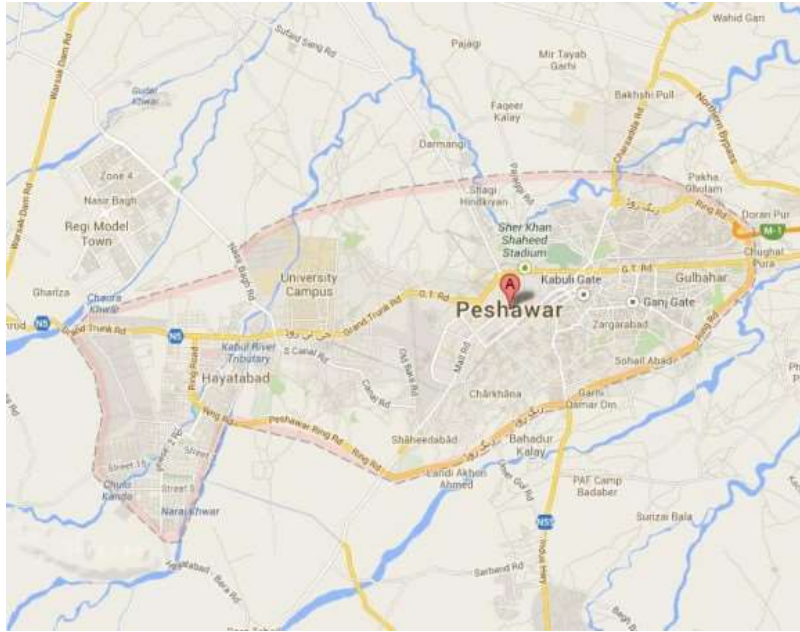


Fig.1.2 Google Map of Peshawar.  
<https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=Map+of+Peshawar>

The city had a dominant position as a trade center of the region and a marketplace between Afghanistan and India, throughout its history. The development of Peshawar has been shaped according to the multiple factors of commerce, strategic position, religion, learning, natural resources, geography and agriculture among others. Peshawar has been home to multiple civilizations, and the city is one of the most ancient cities of the region. And around 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards between central, south and West Asia. Peshawar is traced to the Kushanas (a Central Asian tribe) over 2000 years ago (Wilson 2014).

The Peshawar city is like a bowl encircled by hills on three sides with its water drained into the Kabul River that cuts the valley into two halves and joins itself into the Indus River. The saucer shaped Peshawar Basin is the highest of all Basins that step down. The plane area of Peshawar bowl is quite fertile whereas mountains are rugged and barren. It is an extensive region that expands for 116 kilometers from east to west and is some 84 kilometers on its north to south axis (Nadim 2007: 67).

Peshawar exists as a depression between the mountains in the valley of the Kabul River in the central part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The territory is about 6500 sq. kilometer extending 130

kilometers from the west to east, and 80 kilometers from north to south. The rocky bottom of the valley is formed of Attock table slab covered by thick layer of alluvial clay. The North Eastern and South Western areas of the valley are crisscrossed by multitudinous gullies. The average annual precipitation is about 400 mm with comparatively high winter temperature. The climate is propitious for irrigation agriculture. 70 percent of the agricultural growth is of wheat and the remaining is maize and sugar cane. Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa connects the Peshawar valley with Kohat plains (M. Yu. Mrozova 2006: 213-214).

In the chapter two “The magic of the Frontier” of the book “Journey through Pakistan”, it is said that

“Pakistan’s northern and western borders with China and Afghanistan are marked out by rugged hills and mountains ranging in height from 2000 feet (609 meters) in the south west to over 28000 feet (8.535 meters) in the far north. The gateway through this otherwise unbroken barrier are occasional natural Passes. By far the best known for these is the Khyber Pass, which is 56 kilometers long, 40 kilometers being in Pakistan and the remainder in Afghanistan. From the Khyber border post at Turkham, where an old sign warns hitch hikers that under no circumstances should they spend the night in the open in the pass, it is a 55 kilometers journey to the city of Peshawar. Pakistan’s capital Islamabad is 227 kilometers away, Lahore 497 kilometers and the port of Karachi 1782 kilometers”.

Pakistan and Afghanistan, since ancient times had formed a vital route for trade with one another, and a point of entry to the Subcontinent for the invading armies. The military importance of the route is easily realized as it is wide enough to allow troops and cavalry. Beyond the pass, beckoning lies the lush vale of Peshawar at the head of rich and fertile Indus valley (Amin, Willets, and Hancock 2003: 53).



Fig.1.3 Baab-i- Khyber <https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=babe+khyber&rlz=>

### **1. 3. Peshawar as an Indigenous city and as a mirror of history:**

Traditionally the environment of the city typically resonates a feeling of being non-designed and haphazard. Indian settlements and cities may appear to be organic, chaotic, unplanned and growing randomly, but they are designed to respond to site context, environment, culture and values. They have taken their particular form in context to the culture and world view of the societies who built them (Rappoport 1969: 6).

Peshawar is one of the most ancient cities of the world that went through several stages of settlement and destruction. It is considered the first settlement for the inhabitants coming from the North Western side (Amjad 1999: 33).

Peshawar had a wall surrounding the city and had many *darwazas* (doors) to enter. Each door has some historical value and signifies its name with some reference. Here is a detailed description of the doors with their significance and entry point.

#### **1. 4. *Faseel Shehar*<sup>19</sup> and doors:**

There are very few such cities in the world which are alive after minor changes even today as they were years ago. Peshawar is one of such cities, which is surrounded by a fortified wall. In ancient times it was necessary for a city to be surrounded by a wall to protect it from its enemies. The oldest boundary wall is nonexistent now but some of the remains of the walls from the near past can still be seen. It could be traced in Asoka, Kanishka, Chandra Gupta, Vedas, Ramain and Mahabhart to the Mughal dynasty and a little forward, into the Sikh period and British period that this city had a fortification wall. The wall has been constructed, demolished and reconstructed numerous times during these reigns. According to ancient records it is reported that this city went through destruction and reconstruction process many times. It also witnessed many revolutions. The city had many grand gates to enter the city from all directions. Some important doors are discussed here for better understanding of the city.

#### **1. Kabli Darwaza:**

This door is in the western side of *Bala Hisar*.<sup>20</sup> It includes the famous marketplace of Peshawar named as Qissa Khwani bazaar. And the outer passage goes to the capital of Afghanistan Kabul; this is the significance of this name. This used to be the only passage to Kabul for entry and exit but now there are many other. British gave this gate the name "Edwards's gate", which was not accepted by the inhabitants of Peshawar.

Locals kept on calling this gate Kabli darwaza.

#### **2. *Asa mai darwaza*:**

This door is situated in north side of the Kabli gate in the boundary wall, *faseel-i- Shehr*. There are different stories associated with this door. This door is linked to a temple known as *Asa mai*.

---

<sup>19</sup> wall surrounding the whole city is generally known as Faseel sheharr

<sup>20</sup> Security wall surrounding the city. The word Bala Hissar is from Dari Persian, meaning, "elevated or high fort".

### **3. Kachehri Darwaza:**

It is located at the Eastern side from *Asa mai* door with the *faseel-I sher*. During Sikh period this door was known as *Tanksali darwaza*. During the Sikh period coins were manufactured here,

but in the British period, the way lead to the courts so it adopted the name *Kachehri darwaza*.

### **4. Raiti darwaza:**

Few steps away from *Kachehri darwaza* is the *raiti darwaza*. At one point of time, river Bara moved from this area and reached Charsada road. Sand used to deposit near this place giving it the name *Raiti darwaza*.

### **5. Nawadarwaza (Rampuragate)**

This did not belong to the old doors of Peshawar. During the Sikh period, the Sikhs constructed this door to facilitate the Hindu-Sikh population so that they did not have to pass through the Muslim population.

### **6. Hashtangri gate:**

In Sanskrit *hasht* means eight and *nagar* means city and this door lead to eight cities and in ancient times, it lead to eight cities including Charsada, Mardan, Shabkader and Swat.

### **7. Lahori Darwaza:**

After Hasht Nagri gate, approximately at a distance of five kilometers is the *Lahori darwaza* which leads to Lahore. During British period this was the only passage to Lahore. This way moved from Phandu road to Sayed Ahmad Shahid road moving from district Chamkani and went to GT road by Sher Shah Suri.

### **8. Gang Darwaza:**

Inside gang darwaza, a historical place named Gor Gathri is present. In ancient times, it was of great importance because treasures were stored here. Budh raja Kanishka used held his courts here. It was a passage for treasures to enter the city so the same name continued at that time. It had a Mahatama Gautama

Buddha temple where his relics were present and was called *Shah Ji diya Dehriyan*. Hue Sian and Fa Hein visited this place and mentioned it in their travelogues.

**9. *Yakta Tut darwaza:***

The literal meaning of this Persian word is *Yakta* alone, means ‘pious people’. After the arrival of Muslims, this door had many Sufi shrines inside, who have many devotees even now.

**10. Kohati darwaza:**

This door leads to a place named Kohat. At ancient time it was the only passage but now there are several passages going to Kohat. This boundary has Tomb of *Parichehra*, the wife of the Iranian king Nadir Shah. There are several shrines and a church constructed in the British period.

**11. *Sirki darwaza:***

*Sirki* means ‘East’. The first sun ray used to touch this door that is why it is known as *Sirki* darwaza and people used to determine different directions from here.

**12. *Sard Chah (Thandi Khooi):***

Meaning ‘cold water well’. In ancient times, the door was famous due to this well, but when Islam came about, Muslim did not use its water. The water used to run through the idols of the non-Muslims, and so during the Mughal period, the idols were cleared and the Muslims started consuming the water.

**13. Barzaka darwaza:**

This door was a passage for canals and rivers. Some myths are associated with it due to the meaning of *Berizka*, ‘having no earning’.

**14. Ram das darwaza:**

It is associated with a Sikh ruler named Ram das. From here there is place from where the ruler of Peshawar Nasir Khan presented the key to the city to Nadir Shah.



### **15. *Dabgari darvaza:***

In Hidko language the *dub* means a leather container which was used to carry water or oil to the city.

### **16. Bajouri darvaza:**

This door leads to Bajaur, Dir and Buner. Traders used to stay and exchanged there goods. In ancient times, there used to be huge two entrance doors, but unfortunately, these have perished with the passage of time.

After creation of Pakistan, the city extended in such a way that these doors stand in the center of the city and the progression of population omitted the importance of Faseel-i-Sheh. The municipal corporation started to sell the walled area to the adjacent houses. Now due to political changes the whole outlook of doors of Peshawar changed, and only a few doors of the boundary wall can really be noticed (Akbar 1999: 56-72).

## **1. 5. History of Peshawar:**

It is indeed very unfortunate for the history of a nation to have its eyes completely focused on the future while ignoring its past. And in the name of progression, the historical richness of the past civilizations is constantly being buried in the search of a bright future. The same thing happened in the past with the traditionally, culturally and archaeologically rich city of Peshawar. However, a lot is being done to restore the culture and tradition of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Peshawar has an ancient, homogeneous and heterogeneous civilization, where different families had different customs (Amjad 1999: 12, 13-23).

The earliest archaeological remains in the city of Peshawar date from the Kushan era, followed by the Hindu Shahi (Loeschner 2012: 227). If we talk about Gandhara culture we know from inscriptions that the emperor Asoka of Maurian dynasty 273-236 BC, who ruled over most of the parts of the Subcontinent, strongly supported Buddhism. Gandhara became a dominant element in the cultural life of the areas, which now form North and South Pakistan.

Kushans were the first among the invaders, who treaded through the narrow route of the Khyber Pass to gain control over Gandhara and keep the people of the area pacified in the first century AD. After this historic event, Khyber Pass became the favorite entrance and exit passage to the South Asian Subcontinent. We can find references to the area of Peshawar in the Sanskrit literature, in the writings of classical historian Strabo and Arian and the Geographer Ptolemy (Nadiem 2007: 13). The population of the area is rapidly growing, and according to the 1998 census, the population of Peshawar is 982,816. Population is growing at the highest rate as compared to any city of Pakistan. In addition to the locals, 4 million Afghans, thousands of Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Persians and some Gypsies are also included in the inhabitants of Peshawar.



Fig. 1. 4 Aerial view of Peshawar

<https://www.google.com/search?q=peshawar&client=firefox-b->

This new study commanded to the first prehistoric excavation in Gandhara. The report of the first season was published in “Ancient Pakistan, Bulletin of Department of Archeology, and University of Peshawar Volume 1. Peshawar stands in the center of archaeological sites that abound in the region of ancient Gandhara. Peshawar therefore, is best suited for the training of students of Archaeology (Dani 1964: 1).

According to the history of the North West Frontier Province, the valley of Peshawar was more closely connected politically with Eastern Iran (the ancient Arians and modern Afghanistan) than with India, though in Pre Muhammadan times its population was mainly Indian by race.

### **1.6. Early period:**

The archaeological evidences prove that Peshawar valley had its roots from the Prehistoric times.

It was proved by the finding of Sanghao caves in Mardan. It is also believed through some evidences that Aryans from Central Asia must have stopped or camped in the region, while going to the Subcontinent. However, no researcher has been able to develop a proper link.

### **Inhabitants:**

There are hardly any records of the inhabitants or tribes seated above Peshawar before the time of Mahmud. But they were from the Indian origin. It is probable that the Yaduy were from the descended race, who were either expelled from or emigrated from Gujrat, 1100 years before Christ, and were found at Kandahar and the hills of Kabul. The hill tribes, however continued their independence and we find them descending from the hills in the 5th century BC. Keda Raja, contemporary with Hystaspes, father of Darius. They opposed the renowned Macedonian conqueror on his advance against Porus, the fourth successor of Keda Raja (Gazetteer of the Peshawar District 1897-98 2004: 40).

One of his armies according to Arian went by the direct route through Peshawar, while the other one was commanded by Alexander in person, and marched through Kunar, Bajaur, Swat and Buner. The Greeks were expelled in B.C. 316 by Chandra Gupta. Chandra Gupta and his Indian counterparts were Buddhists (Gazetteer of the Peshawar District 1897-98 2004: 43).

The first mention of Peshawar was in the inscriptions of ‘Naksh -i- Rustam’<sup>21</sup> of the Sasanians Emperor, Shahpur 1, around the middle of the 3rd century AD. It is also mentioned that they moved to Central Asia Samarkand and Tashkent (Nadiem 2007: 71).

Following are verses written by Rudyard Kipling about Khyber Pass and they seem absolutely true, when someone travels to Khyber Pass through any means of travel. May this journey be by camels or by train the feeling remains true.

“When spring – time flushes the desert grass,  
Our kafilas wind through the Khyber Pass,  
Lean are the camels but heavy the frails,  
Light are the purses but heavy the bales,  
When the snow bound trade of the North comes down,  
To the market square of Peshawar Town”.

For many centuries caravans have been moving from Trans-Oxiana (Mawara-an –nahr in Arabic) in Central Asia to the plains of Indus and Ganges. On reverse direction trekked merchants and missionaries, preachers and propagandists of different philosophies and artists and architects who were ever eager to carry with them the ideals of Gandhara School and designs of Buddhist vihara. They all joined on the famous Silk Road to meet their fellow travelers from their opposite direction, intermingle, shared ideas and exchange their goods (Dani 1997: 9).

### ***1.7. Mohallahs:***

The study of the residential *mohallahs* is important in the reconstruction of the fabric of the city. The city’s many residential quarters have organic layouts, whose form had evolved in response to the various factors

---

<sup>21</sup> Is an ancient necropolis located about 12 km northwest of Persepolis, in Fars Province, Iran, with a group of ancient Iranian rock reliefs.

of culture, security and environment (Eyuze 2012: 17-24). The *Mohallah* constituted the basic spatial unit and the smallest organizational structure of the city (Raychaudhuri 1997: 25-30). The hierarchy of the Indian cities placed the elite residential quarters near the citadel and the main *Jamia* mosque, with the ordinary craftsmen and artisans on the outskirts near the city wall (Gaborieau 2008: 231-45). Professor Dani quotes Raverty, who visited the city in 1850 and described the two mounds city at the *Serai* and the mosque, with tall houses giving a picturesque look.

The number of Elite *mohallahs* of Peshawar can be established within three areas of Jahangir pura, Mahabat Khan Mosque and Serai Jahanara as the continuously changing political scenario of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, caused the *umarah* to be in continuous state of flux. *The umarah mohallahs* next to the Serai Jahan Ara and the Mahabat Khan mosque had been initially occupied by Mughal and Durrani elites but most of the original residents have been moved away as their Havelis were destroyed in the Sikh attack on Peshawar (1839). Those that survived near Mahabat Khan Mosque were destroyed in fire in 1898. In the absence of patrons, the remaining *umarah* haveli precincts gave way to the wealthy Hindu and Jane traders and bankers (Dani 1995:28-29-134).

*Mohallah* in general evolved spontaneously with time as its urban form was modified in accordance with its inhabitants' needs. The *mohallah* community could be composed of homogenous population who shared the same religions, cast or professional group but generally it was formed by heterogeneous groups who varied in religion, cast and professions. Nilufer agrees that a neighborhood is primarily a social phenomenon arising from a cohabitation in a physical area (Nilufer 2004: 34-41).

The inward looking built form of the *mohallah* supported both private and public realm activities, and reflected the social construct of the society. The organization of the space from the private to the public realm consisted of the *chowks* (cross roads) between a cluster of houses, which formed a smaller and more intimate area allowing regular social interaction between neighbors. The *gallies* connected to these were acted as social spaces where interactions at the neighborhood scale occurred from the day into the evenings (Khan 2015: 269- 275).

The *mohallahs*, mostly residential in composition, also included other urban institutions such as mosques, *dargahs*,<sup>22</sup> *temples*, *madrassas* and *serais*. They formed self-sufficient settlements with shops, wells, communal areas and places of worship. The smallest unit of the *mohallah* is the *haveli*, whose high walls lined and gave form to the winding streets. The tradition a built form includes the *haveli* and the *mohalla*, whose co-existence and co-influence directs the overall form and shape of the settlement (Eyuce 2012: 17-24).

The city hence grew around the cycle of the trade caravans coming into and leaving the city. The meeting of multiple cultures in the city's bazaars give it a cosmopolitan look: Lowell describes it as 'completely picturesque Central Asian city' (Lowell, 1924). So we can consider Peshawar as a mix of cultures and traditions from Central Asian countries brought by the merchants with their import and export goods.

According to Professor Dani (famous archaeologist and Linguist of Pakistan), Administrative area within Khyber is divided into several parts.

All these variants are however tied with history of Peshawar making and leaving a very exciting history. The variety of people, who traveled and stayed here, left their marks with their culture, on the existing population of the area. According to Rubina Imtiaz Qazilbash "the city has been a converging point for the civilizations of east and west. Elphinstone describes a scene in the bazaar; "the streets were crowded with men of all nations and languages in every variety of dress and appearance." The result was in creation of a cosmopolitan culture (Imtiaz 1996: 7-18).

Peshawar's known history begins before the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. At that time the valley and the adjacent regions of modern Swat, Buner and Bajaur formed the ancient kingdom of Gandhara. In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., Gandhara and Peshawar formed part of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia. The armies of Alexander of Macedon occupied it briefly in the fourth century B.C. but they lost the region to

---

<sup>22</sup> The grave of a Sufi saint in Islam, where pilgrims and devotees come for prayers

Chandra Gupta Maurya. These people from the subcontinent ruled over the area for the century. The West asserted itself again and roughly in second century B.C. for another hundred years, it became a seat of political power for the Greeks. Early in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the region saw their arrival of victorious ‘Sakas’ or ‘Scythians’. Soon after them, came the Parthians, who ruled for a century. The great Kushanas took over from the Parthians in the first century A.D. These were Kushanas who called Peshawar as ‘*Poshpura*’. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., the region was again occupied by the Persians. This time the Sassanid ruled. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., they lost Gandhara again to the ‘Kidara Kushanas’. Their capital was at Peshawar. These rulers are known as ‘Little Kushanas’ (Marshall 1973:1).

To understand the later absorption of art and architecture styles in the city of Peshawar, one must keep in mind that the Mughal emperors of India had a highly cultivated aesthetic sense. They adorned India with superb architecture. Under their patronage, art flourished and indigenous and foreign ideas intertwined in fresh pattern of great beauty and profundity. In their way of life the Mughals sought perfection and exclusiveness (Wech 1985 194).

Meanwhile twenty seven years before Babur’s invasion, a subtle invasion of India from the South had already started. Vasco de Gama<sup>23</sup> landed a Calicut on the Malabar Coast some three hundred miles north of India’s southern strip. His arrival opened the country to European traders. Portuguese, Dutch, French, British and Europeans came eagerly to profit from the golden bird of India. Their armies and navies soon followed these trading vessels. After the reign of Aurangzeb the Mughal Empire started crumbling. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century British came over most of their European competition and gradually started taking over the Mughals. By mid-19<sup>th</sup> century they had established their rule all over India. In 1877, Queen Victoria proclaimed herself the Empress of India (Wech 1985 194-195).

---

<sup>23</sup> Vasco da Gama was a Portuguese explorer and the first European to reach India by sea. His initial voyage to India (1497–1499) was the first to link Europe and Asia by an ocean route, connecting the Atlantic and the Indian oceans and therefore, the West and the Orient.

In all these years, while the rulers were struggling for their political power, they inflicted wars and destruction on the people. Meanwhile, the artists and artisans absorbed new ideas and further enriched the culture of the land. India (and Peshawar as a part of it) evolved into a great tradition, and as an immense storehouse of ideas, techniques and ancient motifs, provided energy and inspiration to its artists and craftsmen. These unnoticed masters have, generations after generations, preserved, refined and improved their skills and techniques. Their creation often astonishing and verge on miraculous.

### **1. 8. The *Havelis* of Peshawar, general features:**

*Havelis* not only fulfill the need of the occupants but also become an integral part of the *mohallahs* layout. The *Havelis* of Peshawar are three to four stories high, built in timber, brick and adobe. The irregular blocks are packed tightly together to avoid heat in summer and saves from cold in winters. Generally, we cannot see any windows on the ground floor to maintain *parda*<sup>24</sup> and security but the only windows are opened in the central courtyard of the house (Dani 35). All the *Havelis* of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Subcontinent have a central courtyard for light and air. There is a *Mardan khana*<sup>25</sup> on the ground floor for other needs for the males of the family may be of social, commercial or organizing functions. The *Havelis* have a pattern to follow for the internal and external layout for example, internal courtyard has all the openings in the courtyard and externally they have controlled openings in shape of *Jhorokas* or balconies to provide privacy as well as feeling of openness. These openings also are so well maintained with slotted windows that one can easily have the view of the street without losing the privacy. The large merchant *Havelis* occupying street fronts on the main streets of the city pushed the relatively poorer occupants to congregate the crowded inner areas and rear ends of the *mohallahs* (Hazreesingh 1999). Since Peshawar is a merchant city, many *Havelis* in the city have shops on the ground floor and residence at the subsequent floors. This is also one of the reason to select a place for *Haveli* near by the business center.

---

<sup>24</sup> Veil or to hide, it is usually with reference to women in Subcontinent

<sup>25</sup> A place for the mail of the house



## CHAPTER 2

### SIGNIFICANT HAVELIS OF PESHAWAR

#### 2.1. Havelis and their affiliation with merchants:

“South Asia was responsible for a much larger share of world trade than any comparable zone and, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, may have possessed upwards of one-quarter of the world's total manufacturing capacity”(Washbrook 1938: 57- 96).

Merchants, being the richest, obviously were interested in owning palace like residences. The trade relations were widespread, both overland and overseas, and had enormous financial implications, forming what was truly an international enterprise (Dale 1994: 3-6).

Peshawar city is remarkably filled with Havelis. The walled city has small and big *Havelis* in nearly all the streets, like all big cities of Pakistan, i.e. Rawalpindi, Lahore, Wazirabad and many other cities. Peshawar has the same tradition of making comfortable and decorated living places, which occasionally served other purposes i.e. religious, social, commercial or business centers.

Before moving on to the main case study of Sethi *Haveli*, Peshawar, let's have a brief introduction to some important *Havelis* that became famous either for their construction style or for their affiliation to the owner. Peshawar has been a center of business; the rich people constructed many religious and secular buildings in this area. The well-known personalities working on authoritative positions were financially well off and preferred constructing residential buildings of splendid size and worth. These residences are commonly known as *Havelis*. Sometimes big *Havelis* were constructed to show the owner's elite class. These *Havelis* were full of all the facilities within the residential area. There are some small *Havelis* in Peshawar that gained importance due to the popularity of the owner e.g. Haveli of Dilip Kumar, a famous Indian film icon of sixties and seventies. Some of these *Havelis* are like small palaces. While visiting these small, medium and large sized *Havelis*, there were some general features that were common. Almost all the *Havelis* had a

courtyard, lots of windows and doors for cross ventilation, a very splendid entrance door, wells, and most *Havelis* had basements for storing valuables. The basements were also used for sleeping in the summers to avoid the strong summer heat. The *Havelis* belonging to *Sikh* period have some common and some distinct features. If we compare Hindu and Muslim architecture, Hindu architecture commonly has dark rooms, but the temperature is very cool from inside, whereas Muslim buildings are well ventilated and well lit. One more influence that was dominant in the buildings of Peshawar is the Central Asian influence, either through Mughal kings or owing to the owner being well travelled to Central Asian countries. The thick walls and the roofs with clay or mud lining are the two major reasons to keep the *Havelis* cool. We can witness another feature in most *Havelis* - their ceilings are decorated and are very high. We will see one common feature in most *Havelis*. It is, if the rooms have no windows just two ventilators are created to sufficiently serve the purpose of cross ventilation. Here is a brief account of important *Havelis* in Peshawar, that were visited from 2015 to 2017 to monitor the latest condition of the buildings. Before that the development of the *Havelis* after 1857 is being discussed briefly.

## **2. 2. The concept and development of Havelis after 1857:**

The main reasons for the decline of the *Havelis* in Subcontinent was the financial downfall of the monarchs and the Mughal support. British confiscated their assets and awarded these to their supporters. So it became difficult for them to rise from the financial losses as well as the patronage. These *umarah* were forced to sell these *Havelis* and confine their living to a few rooms rather than living in a palace like residences. In this way, the war of independence in 1857 was a symbol of fall of Mughal Empire. These *Havelis* were till then like palaces of Delhi (Hosagrahar 2001: 26-45). The change in lifestyles of many of the richest merchants and bankers of India (Hindu, Sikhs and Muslims) took place during the Mughal and British eras. The Punjab had been ruled by the Mughal governors from 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century; these were of Turkish, Persian and Pathan origins (Gandhi 2013: 58). These officials not only maintained the Mughal protocols but also observed their lifestyles (Bayly 1983:387). In the new social order of British India, merchants adopted Persian mannerism and courtly patterns by retaining big Mughal style *Havelis* in towns, using luxurious

carriages, clothing and maintaining a large army of servants (Nakatani 2013). Due to lack of material and literary evidence it is hard to verify merchant *Havelis* prior to 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bernier 1916: 246). Maybe the material used was not permanent and might consist of sun baked bricks and poor quality of timber, resulting in the decay of the *Havelis*. The typology of courtyard houses evolved as a result of social, cultural, environmental and climatic constraints. The more a person is financially well off the more elaborate and multi usage he will have of his dwelling. This courtyard building especially suited the climatic conditions of Subcontinent (Renolds 2002: 18). Pramer suggests that the urban courtyard developed from the rural village houses (Parmer 2005: 51). The typology has reached here directly from Indus valley civilization (3300-1300 BCE).

The specific term “*Haveli*” started from Persia and came to India by Mughals (Tillostson1999:1).

These urban houses were owned by *umarah*, aristocrats (Jain 2002: 1). The word *Haveli* describes a big house of a prosperous family from the early 17<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Prasad 1998: 1). Remaining domestic houses, *Havelis* can be seen from Peshawar to Khairpur in Pakistan and from Gujarat to Dhaka in India, even we find them in Afghanistan and Central Asian countries with cultural impact on them.

### **2. 3. Havelis as a status symbol in subcontinent:**

*Havelis* were indeed constructed with some other usage of the same place, which was used for residential purpose. But at the same time these gorgeous looking residences also served as status symbol for the elite. The *Haveli* was a product of the prevalent social structure, and became a symbol of its owner’s public and official recognition (Jain 2002:13). The major stylistic influences on most of the *Havelis* constructed from the 17<sup>th</sup> until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were predominantly Mughal (Das 2005: 29-30). The earlier large *Havelis* were built by the *umarah* (17<sup>th</sup>- mid 19<sup>th</sup> century) and these were followed by the smaller merchant *Havelis* of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. That also included the building style of *Sethi Havelis* Peshawar, Pakistan.

“In Delhi, the seat of the Islamic power for 800 years till the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the nobility was largely Muslim-though there were many courtiers and Rajas. The merchant class was mostly Hindu. The Muslim *Haveli* form developed to its peak from mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Hindu form was developed from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. So they can be called the ‘Muslim Nobles’ and the ‘Hindu merchant’ houses type” (Prasad 1988: 3-9).

But Pervaiz Vandal and Sajida Vandal<sup>26</sup> find it quite simplistic to segregate the Havelis as Muslim and Hindu. They find this approach to Indian architecture as perpetuated in Colonial era by educationists such as Claud Batley (Vandal 2006: 27-29).

Asher confirms that Muslim and Hindu types of palaces or *Havelis* borrowed from Mughal architecture (Asher 1992: 281-203). With reference to these researchers it can be said about the association of early large *Havelis* of the *umarah* and the later small *Havelis* of the merchants. There are hardly any differences based on religious beliefs except for the Ibadat khana<sup>27</sup> and the fresco painting themes.

These grand *Havelis* contained multiple spaces that ensured its importance as an independent unit within the area. These included public reception areas, gardens, quarters, *zanan khana*, accommodation for the entourage under the patronage of the nobles including soldiers, servants, artisans and craftsmen (Hosagraher 2001: 28-32). Dalryple says *umarah Havelis* in Hyderabad were a complex of courtyards filled with fountains and *chahar*<sup>28</sup> *baghs*, *baradari*<sup>29</sup> pavilions, arcaded with Mughal cusped arches and intricately carved wooden *Jharokas* (Dalryple 2004: 250).

#### **2. 4. Typical *Haveli* Components:**

---

<sup>26</sup> Professors of architecture in Pakistan and running THAAP (Trust for History, Art and Architecture, Pakistan). They arrange several conferences and talks under this umbrella.

<sup>27</sup> Persian word used in Urdu for place of worship  
4. Four sided gardens

<sup>29</sup> A pavilion having 12 doors, they can be with arches mostly during Mughals

The typical *Havelis* having entry from the streets were adjoined with other neighboring *Havelis* regularly and sometimes it was difficult to separate or demark them separately.

The appearance of a *Haveli* depended on its patron's position and taste, and on the land available and was a combination of Mughal and local architectural features (Tillotson 1998: 10).

The exterior or the facade of the *Haveli* did not provide with any view of the inside house, however the facade is decorated with niches, arched windows and *Jharokas* from where the residents can view the outside. All *Havelis* have a *dehliz* (threshold) and a *deorhi* (foyer). Since all the *Havelis* had public and domestic domain, the *dehliz* and *deorhi* helped in maintaining the privacy of the house. The spaces in the *Haveli* were utilized according to needs of joint family system, that is, a collective living for extended family members who were blood relatives. Their lives were not so private but the privacy of the family unit as a whole was protected from the outside. Privacy was communal in character rather than individual (Sinha 1990: 6-9). So the front rooms or area was specified for the men of the family (*Mardan khana*) or for the social or business activities of the males. In the residential quarters of the *Haveli*, the use of the space was more flexible with rooms doubling as reception rooms, living rooms and dining rooms during the day and bedroom at night. There was however no division of 'bedrooms' or 'dinning rooms' or 'sitting rooms' until the late colonial period.

In summer, days were spent in the lower rooms and evenings in the terrace gardens, while in winter, the pattern was reversed (Heidari 2006: conference).

Externally, the *Haveli* does not indicate the use of internal space but internally they are defined in sections through the use of courtyards (Mehta 1996: 6). The regularity of form was maintained with the mutual collaboration of the exterior walls and interior rooms, which absorbed the irregular form of the site to ensure that the courtyard takes a square regular form. The geometry of the courtyard was reinforced at times by the placement of a central fountain at the intersection of the axes of the opposite bays (Petruccioli 2006: 3-20). The courtyard as the heart of the house acted as an organizing element of the surrounding spaces. It

held the spatial relationships of the house together, acting in every way as its core (Hadjichristou 2012: 361-365).

## 2. 5. Perfect Geometry for the *Haveli* courtyard:

The house plan, elevation and section evolved from the ideal shape of the square based *hasht-behist*<sup>30</sup> (eight paradises) form (Mumtaz 2015: Interview by Samra Khan). The phrase *hasht-behist* meaning “eight paradises,” has been interpreted as a reference to the eight rooms surrounding the central chamber. The basic layout is divided into nine parts by four intersecting construction lines. The symbolic entity of *hasht-behist* emanated from the two rotating squares which combine to make the eight pointed star and the octagon, underlining the belief of life and afterlife in Islam (Khan 2011).

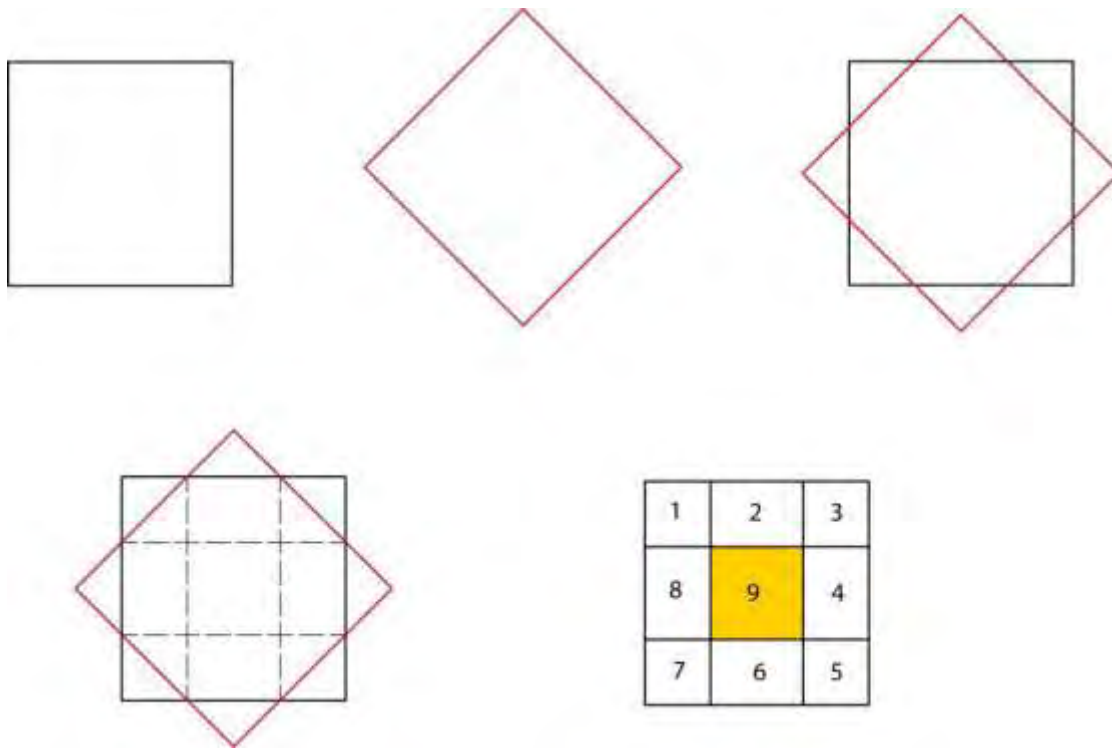


Fig. 2. 1. Geometry of courtyard, diagram by S. Khan. 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Hasht-behesht, Persian: hašt-behešt, literally "eight heavens" may refer to: Hasht Behesht, a pavilion in Isfahan, Iran. Hasht-behesht (architecture), a type of floor plan.

We can see the 9 fold plan; an ideal building form emanating from the Mughal palaces and buildings that have a square center. In open buildings, the sky serves as the dome but in palaces and mosques it is covered by a dome. Jain calls the sky the intangible ceiling, spreading over the courtyard (Jain 2011: 18-21). But later when construction of *Havelis* came in the hands of the merchants they preferred constructing permanent and decorated *Havelis* as their residences, which were used for social, religious and business purpose in addition to living.

Now let's move to the description of some eminent *Havelis* of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in the famous areas of Peshawar that will help in understanding some general features of *Haveli* construction in Peshawar.

While passing through the famous Qissa Khwani *bazaar* of Peshawar we come across many beautiful *Havelis* that tell us about the general outlook of the residences of *umarah* of Peshawar.



Fig.2. 2. A haveli on way in Qissa Khwani bazar, photo by researcher 2015

## 2. 6. *Haveli* of Raj Kapoor:

“This is the famous birth place and residence of Legendary Indian film hero Raj Kapoor, whose father Pirthavi Raj started from theater and silent movies. Pirthavi Raj also known as "the greatest star of Indian cinema", was a noted Indian film actor, producer and director of Hindi cinema. He was born on December

14, 1924 in Peshawar, British India (now Pakistan) Died: June 2, 1988 (age 63) in New Delhi, India  
Siblings: Shashi Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Urmila Sial Kapoor, Nandi Kapoor, Devi Kapoor. Children:  
Rishi Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Rajiv Kapoor, Ritu Nanda, Reema Kapoor  
(<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004292/>). Raj Kapoor was the son of well-known Indian actor Pirthavi  
Raj Kapoor, who acted both in film and on stage. After apprenticing in the Bollywood production studios  
of the 1940's, at 24 years of age Raj Kapoor produced, directed and acted in *Aag*.



Fig.2. 3. Portrait of Raj Kapoor  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=Raj+Kapoor&client=firefox-b-ab&tbn=isch&imgil=E0bvLnSLEXYIM%253A%253B9v>



Fig. 2. 4 A View of Raj Kapoor haveli.  
Photo by researcher 2015



Hearing a lot from oral sources and newspapers, I finally planned and visited the Raj Kapoor *Haveli* in December 2015 to evaluate the present condition of the house in Dhakki Munawwar Shah near the famous *Qissa Khwani bazaar* in Peshawar city. The house was originally six storied having several rooms. Its facade is ornamented with exquisite floral motifs and *Jharokas*. The sad part about the *Haveli* is that it has lost its interior portion and it is impossible even to enter from the main door to the inner portion, which is almost completely demolished.

Mr Imtiaz Ahmad updated in his article in Hindustan times that the ancestral home of legendary Indian film star Raj Kapoor, “that the house in Pakistan’s Peshawar will soon be a part of history after the provincial government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa failed to come up with a plan to save it”. The News, a local daily, said that “the demolition of the historic Kapoor Haveli, which is the birth place of Raj Kapoor and several others, has started to perish. The roof of the 98-year-old house was pulled down. The house with multi-stories, located in Dhakki Munawwar Shah near the famous Qissa Khwani bazaar in the city, originally had six stories and several rooms. Its front is adorned with exquisite floral motifs and Jharokas”.



Fig. 2. 5. *Jharoka* of Raj Kapoor haveli.  
Photograph by researcher December 2015

“The provincial administration had earlier tried to buy the house from its present owners and wanted to convert it into a museum but the plan could not come through after price became an issue”. (Raj Kapoor’s Haveli in Pakistan’s Peshawar is facing demolition Imtiaz Ahmed, Hindustan Times, Islamabad. Updated: Jan 16, 2016 14:01 IST).

Muhammad Ibrahim Zia writes in his book “Peshawar *ke Fankar, Filmon mein*” that new generation will be astonished to know that before Independence of Pakistan the Actors that reached the peaks of success and popularity were mostly or at least 80% were Muslims and from Peshawar or its surroundings. Most film actors were working for the theater at the same time with films or we can say that actually they were actors of theater who moved to silent movies first and then to talking movies.



Fig. 2. 6 Another view of *Jharoka*. Photograph by researcher December 2015

The most famous actor of early times is Pirthavi Raj Kapoor, who used to live in the *Dhaki Munawwer Shah* in Peshawar. His father moved from Lail pure now Faisalabad and settled here in Peshawar and built a beautiful special Haveli as a tradition of rich people of the time (Zia 2003: 96- 102).

They lived in this Haveli for a long period of time. In 1931 their family finally moved to Bombay since his sons and grandsons were working in Indian movies of the time. Pirthavi Raj and his wife dramatically died of cancer, just fifteen days apart.

The Haveli of Raj Kapoor is still surviving but in a much debilitated condition or we can say almost at no point of restoration or conservation. He used to visit his relatives in Peshawar every year till partition of India and Pakistan. Almost all his sons and grandsons visited Peshawar and enjoyed the traditional hospitality of the region (Zia 2003: 102- 106)



Fig. 2. 7. Outer view of Raj Kapoor *haveli*. Photograph by researcher Dec 2015

The pillars at the entrance show that there must be a lot of beautiful decorative woodwork inside the Haveli as a tradition of other Havelis in Peshawar.



Fig.2.8 Pillars at the entrance of Raj Kapoor *haveli*. Photograph by researcher Dec2015

## 2. 7. Dilip Kumar's residence:

The famous Indian film star was born on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1922 in Peshawar's historical Qissa Khwani bazaar in *Mohallah Khuda Dad* to a religious Muslim family, he was named Muhammad Yousaf. But after becoming an actor he changed his name to Dilip Kumar to hide from his family for being an actor because his father considered the profession indecent. According to Muhammad Ibrahim Zia, after completing his education he tried many professions and worked on some business ventures, dealing with the British working in Bombay, but all of them lasted for a short period of time and then he adopted acting as a profession (Zia 2003: 332- 341).



Fig. 2. 9 Portrait of Dilip  
[https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=portrait+of+dilip+kumar&rlz=1C1GGRV\\_enPK753PK753&so](https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=portrait+of+dilip+kumar&rlz=1C1GGRV_enPK753PK753&so)



Fig. 2.10. Front view of Dilip Kumar *haveli* in Peshawar.  
Photograph by researcher Dec 2015

Dilip Kumar who was personally a very emotional person once visited his house in Pakistan in 1988 he kissed the soil overwhelmed with emotions. But later when he was awarded Nishan-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest Civilian award, he tried to reach his house but he was not able to do so because of the crowd.

#### **Acquisition:**

“On 13 July 2013, Nawaz Sharif (former Prime minister of Pakistan) directed the ministry of information, broadcasting and national heritage to acquire the house. The order was forwarded to the director general of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) for implementation. According to media sources, the move was intended to promote the cultural India-Pakistan relation "Dilip Kumar's ancestral home declared national heritage in Pakistan" (IBN Live. July 13, 2014).

"Dilip Kumar's ancestral home in Pakistan declared national heritage" (Financial Express. July 13, 2014).

Nawaz Sharif government also announced to declare the house of Dilip Kumar as a Museum but alas, this wish has not been fulfilled. When I visited his house it was really depressing to see that, like many other culturally important buildings, this house has also been largely neglected and the roofs of the house are no more there. So much so that we were not able to open the entrance door to the house. So the only way to have a look was to go to the roof of the neighboring house and have a view of the house from there. This is indeed a matter of great sorrow and grief that the orders of the Head of the government are not being followed. The authorities' put their own lock on the building and left it in the hands of nature that obviously resulted in the constant decay of the building. In a few years there would hardly be any marks of the building, which is already surrounded by the shops and go downs etc.

## **2. 8. House of Shah Rukh Khan:**

As we all know, strong connections exist between Pathan Land and the Indian Cinema. Shahrukh Khan's family originated from the 200 year old Qissa Khwani *bazaar*, from where many other Indian and Pakistani film stars were also unveiled to the world.



Fig. 2. 11. Portrait of Shahrukh Khan

[https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=shah+ruk+kh+photo&rlz=1C1GRV\\_enPK753PK753&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=CGXJyHxpXi](https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=shah+ruk+kh+photo&rlz=1C1GRV_enPK753PK753&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=CGXJyHxpXi)



As said about the famous *bazaar* that travelers used to come to this bazaar while coming for business just to share stories, as the bazar is known for the story tellers. They sat there and used to exchange stories with each other. This tradition has more or less passed away. However, to this day, travelers or people who are visiting Peshawar for the first time come to this *bazaar* to enjoy the aroma of the tea.

So, much like the Kapoor family and Dilip Kumar's family, Shahrukh's family was also one of the renowned families of Peshawar, who lived in a narrow lane known as Shah Wali Katal. Here stands a dark green Haveli (manor house) that belongs to the ancestors of this famous internationally renowned Indian film hero, Shah Rukh Khan

“Daa da Shah Rukh korde (This is Shah Rukh's house),” said the cab driver that took us to the place. This is where Shah Rukh Khan's father Taj Mohammad Khan was born. Shah Rukh's Cousin, Mansoor Ahmad or Toofi as the family calls him, remembers the last time he met Shah Rukh in 1980 when he visited Peshawar with his father Taj Muhammad. He became overwhelmed with memories of the past.



Fig. 2. 12. Board displayed at the door of Shahrukh Khan's house.  
Photograph by researcher 2015

His family came from Afghanistan. The family business was Bamboo trade, and his cousins are still practicing the business in Shah Wali Katal<sup>31</sup> and other areas of Peshawar. His father and uncle were leaders

---

<sup>31</sup> A thickly populated Mohallah

of the Congress and active in Independence movement. Shah Rukh Khan was from a very educated family; his father was a lawyer but looked after the family Bamboo business. Shah Rukh has a Master's degree in Mass Communication and also got education from National School of Drama in Delhi (Zia 2013: 551-563).

The present condition of Shah Rukh Khan's house is not good but still his cousin Noor Jehan Munni lives in that house, but unfortunately, I was not allowed to enter the house in February 2016. Noor Jehan's strict orders to the servants were to not allow any guests inside.



Fig. 2. 13. (left) Shahrukh Khan's Cousin and Saleem Afzal. Photo by researcher Dec 2015

However, two cousins of Shah Rukh Khan, Mr Masood Ahmad and Maqsood Ahmad<sup>32</sup> were kind enough to provide some oral information about him and his family. Maqsood Ahmad took us to his house to share some rare pictures of Shah Rukh Khan with us. He also mentioned about the hospitality of Shah Rukh Khan when he visited him in India and when he visited them in Pakistan.

---

<sup>32</sup> These cousins of Shah Rukh are still residing in the same vicinity and doing bamboo business.





Fig.2.14. Shah Rukh haveli outer view. Photo by researcher Dec 2015

## **2. 9. *Haveli* of Haji Ahmad Gull built in A.H. 1300. A.D. 1882**

The main case study of my research is *Haveli Zanan Khana* of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi. The other Havelis in the vicinity of *Mohallah Sethian* have the same grandeur and decorative style as the Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh. Due to the families residing in these Havelis, people are not permitted to enter. But I must appreciate the kind gesture of Miss Rabia Sethi, who is the Principal in a college. She not only allowed me to enter the Haveli, but also showed me the rooms of the Haveli along with very useful details related to the Sethi family and local hospitality. As discussed earlier, the greatest constraint in this research is the reluctant or non-cooperative behavior of the Sethi families residing in these Havelis.

The two important personalities whose children constructed two grand *Havelis* in *Mohallah Sethian* are

Haji Karam Bakhsh

Haji Ahmad Gull

Besides the main case study, that is *Haveli Zanan Khana* of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi, the other prominent *Havelis* that were constructed by the progeny of Haji Karam Bakhsh, are also under discussion. All the *Havelis* of the Sethis have the same architectural features so we cannot say that one family has contributed less or the other contributed more. But the only constraint is the people are residing in Mian Ahmad Gull's *Haveli*, so it is difficult to document it in detail. The residential part was constructed by his son Abdul Rahim Sethi.

Before talking about the *Haveli* of Ahmad Gull it will be good to discuss the lineage of the Karam Bakhsh.

### **Haji Karam Bakhsh**

Mian Ahmad Gull

Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi

The lineage and family of Haji Karim Bakhsh will be discussed with the documentation of his *Haveli* later.

**The lineage and family of Mian Ahmad Gull is as follows.**

### **Mian Ahmad Gull**

Abdul Rashid

Abdul Rahim

Abdul Jalil

Abdul Aziz

### **Abdul Rahim**

Karam Ilahi Sethi

Fazal Ilahi Sethi

### **Karam Ilahi Sethi**

Abdul Wadood Sethi

**Abdul Wadood Sethi**

Abdul Rauf

Ahmad Daood

Muhammad Rizwan

**Sisters:**

Maimoona Sethi and Rabia Sethi

The residential part of Haji Gull Ahmad was constructed by his son Abdul Rahim Sethis, which is on the right when we enter *Kucha Sethian*. Presently, the sons and daughters of Abdul Wadood Sethi are living in this *Haveli*. This Haveli is known as Gull Ahmad Haveli because now, the residential and business building both are entered through the same entrance in the Kucha Sethian. Mr Abdul Rauf Sethi, Ahmad Daud Sethi and Muhammad Rizwan Sethi along with their two sisters Rabia Sethi and Maimoona Sethi are still residing in this palace like residence of the Sethis.



Fig.2. 15. Entrance of Haji Ahmad Gull haveli. Photograph by researcher April. 2016

The entrance door reflects the typical style of carved doors with highly decorative wooden pillars and two *Chowkies*<sup>33</sup>. It was the tradition of Peshawar and also of big *Havelis* in Rawalpindi and Punjab to create these *Chowkies* on both sides of the entrance. In the figures, we can judge that the residents are not able to maintain the present condition of this magnificently carved entrance. The colour of the wood reflects that it has not been polished since long. The Haveli of Ahmad Gull previously had its main door in the main bazar but now both are entered by a grand entrance with wooden pillars and a beautifully carved door. As soon as we entered this massive door, we stand in front of another great door and a confusing entry. When I turned to the right side of the corridor and entered through another wooden door, I found myself in the past when Peshawarites were constructing according to the cosmopolitan culture of that era. A time when the influences from the eastern civilizations were still dominant and ideas from British period had not taken part in the construction style of the area.



Fig. 2. 16. Beautifully carved entrance arches. Photograph by researcher 2016

It was the time when the architecture of Peshawar had a lot of eastern influences. The woodwork of the residential part of the Haveli of Ahmad Gull represents a synthesis of old culture that prevailed in Peshawar. The atrium is different from Karim Bakhsh Haveli, it is without the fountain. The rooms are on a high plinth raised by three stairs to reach the room. This elevation is given to accommodate the windows of the basement. These cellars have *punjali*<sup>34</sup> screens opening in the atrium.

---

<sup>33</sup> Sitting place with the entrance door can be seen in many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century havelis in Subcontinent. a sitting place for the guard

<sup>34</sup> A design that became a trade mark of Sethi havelis



Fig.2.17. View of rooms around the atrium. Photo by researcher April 2016



Fig.2. 18.A view of the sitting room from atrium. Photo by researcher. April 2016

From the right and left of the atrium two stairways rise towards the Lounge. Then the roof is projected with a wooden *chajja*<sup>35</sup> making a terrace for the next story. This figure shows the variety of intricate decorative

---

<sup>35</sup> A chajja is the projecting or overhanging eaves or cover of a roof, usually supported on large carved brackets. You can use the words balcony, canopy, gallery, jetty, mat, overhang, weatherboard or weatherboarding for it in English.

patterns of wood in this whole wall and the door which takes us to a room filled with original antique pieces saved by the owner. These serve as reminders for them about the status of their grand and great-grandparents' taste and wealth. There is a great variety of design in the wooden *Jali* with intricate carving. On three sides of the atrium are rows of arches supported by wooden pillars, beautifully carved one above the other. Generally speaking, the woodwork of this *Haveli* is more intricate and splendid as compared to the Karim Bakhsh Haveli nearby. As a normal routine of Sethi *Havelis* Peshawar, the Lounge is constructed on a high plinth to accommodate the underground cellars, which have windows to the basement for perforation and light with a *punjali* screens opening in to the atrium. All three walls of this grand lounge are decorated with a variety of wooden designs. While entering from the central wooden stairs, on the northern side of the lounge there are smaller wooden arches that open into the kitchen, which comprises of a rectangular room. The stairs rise from the right and left of the atrium taking us to the lounge, and then to the second floor. This forms the second story with a *chajja*, overhanging in this case a projecting terrace which does not have a *verandah*, which is decorated with geometrical patterns, a characteristic feature of Medieval Indian architecture (R. Nath, 1986: 25).

The wooden pillars and arches have intricate carving all around the arch with an upper band of geometrical shapes.

## **2. 10. Sethi Mohallah Arches:**

Baber the great Mughal King (1526-1530), the descendent of Timur, brought the richness of the Mongol heritage to India. We can say that it was the evolutionary period for arches during Mughal Kings in India. These reached their climax with the musical nature of the arch, known as cusped arch, during the period of Shah Jehan (Kuhnel 1966: 159). Most arches in Sethi Mohallah belong to the Shah Jehan type but with a slight modification; they had less pronounced cusps and were carved like a delicate curved lace, decorating the thick edges of the arch. The spandrel of the arches is decorated with intricate floral and geometric patterns that have been a part of other such Havelis in Rawalpindi, having affiliation with the Sikhs.





Fig. 2. 19. Detail of a pillar. Photo by author.



Fig. 2. 20. Details of carving around the arches of Haji Ahmad Gull Haveli's residential part. Photograph by author

The span is less round with a wider semicircular shape. The spandrels are smaller, as we can see in the figure, as compared to the size of the pillar. There is a broad horizontal wooden beam.

The richly carved arabesque<sup>36</sup> in high relief gives them a look of an intricately carved lace.

While standing in the middle of the atrium the viewer gets amazed by the intricacy, variety and repertoire of the motives, designs and patterns carved in wood. This shows the mastery of Abdul Hakim Jan who has carved these wooden motives with ease.

## **2. 11. *Shahnashin*:**

*Shahnashin* is a Persian word meaning “reclining place of a king”. This is the name given to a room in the second story of Haji Ahmad Gull Haveli in Peshawar because of its grandeur. One wall is made up of wood with a cusped arch. The arches have folding wood panels called “Bastas” or “Arusis”<sup>37</sup>. When these Arusis are folded, in the recessions given between them, one can look into the Lounge below. When drawn it provides complete privacy. Arusis are divided in rectangular sections with geometrical designs on them. The colours used on wooden wall are red and green. This combination gives a balanced look. It is decorated with tiny floral designs of yellow ochre and white, which further softens the overall effect of the wall. On top of each Jali is fitted a punjali screen, through which the light enters to the Shahnashin room and reflects on the opposite wall that is filled with mirror mosaics and shines with golden colour. It is said that this room was used as bridal suite and also sometimes used for special occasions for entertaining guests (oral information by Rabia Sethi). A few terminologies specially need to be explained here are as follows.

**2. 12. Arusis:** “Arus” is a Persian word, which means bride. Generally the oriental brides’ especially Muslim brides hide themselves in the Dupatta veil that is why this term is used. And because in Peshawar there has always been a tradition of veil and separate sitting places for women so this term was also used as an architectural feature. (Nath, R 1986: 84).

---

<sup>36</sup> An ornament or style that employs flower, foliage, or fruit and sometimes animal and figural outlines to produce an intricate pattern of interlaced lines

<sup>37</sup> The folding wooden windows made for parda



### **2. 13. Mutakkas:**

On the three sides of the atrium, is the nook shaft, locally known as “Mutakkas” to support smaller arches. The carving is delicate and seems inspired by Gandhara designs displayed in Peshawar Museum’s reliefs.

The tradition of rich woodwork might have come from Seljuk traditions. Some fine pieces of wood carvings are in Ankara, Turkey from thirteen century. Later on through Mughals this delicate wood decoration came to Peshawar (Stuert, Cary Welch 1985: 323- 324).

### **Underground Cellars:**

Ahmad Gull’s Haveli residential part has slanting windows in the Cellars opening in the courtyard. These tehkhanas were used for storing their valuables like Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli.

### **2. 14. Cheeni Khanas:**



Fig. 2. 21. Cheeni Khana, Rabia Sethi haveli.  
Photo by researcher 2016

This *Haveli* is a treasure of creativity in terms of art and architectural mastery and the <sup>38</sup>*Cheeni Khana* in each room of the Haveli represents an even greater aesthetic taste of the owner. The tradition of making *Cheeni Khanas* in their Havelis came from Central Asia and was adopted by Sethi family.

The rare collection of the porcelain Pots were decorated in these *Cheeni Khanas* and were reflecting in the mirrors of Cheeni khana. These unique and antique pot were mostly collected from Central Asian countries. The family residing in this house of Ahmad Gull is an educated family and is trying to preserve it for future generations. Miss Rabia Sethi has been kind enough to show these pots and shared a little that she knew about them.

The mirror work in *Cheeni Khana* reflects light in a dazzling way that makes these unique pots shimmer. This whole collection of pottery is displayed by the young generation of Haji Ahmad Gull in a very decent way. Some pottery pieces have been used by the family and are no more there.



Fig. 2. 22. A view of *Cheeni Khana* in the main Lounge of the *haveli*. Photo by researcher 2016

---

<sup>38</sup> A place to display porcelain pots decorated usually with pieces of mirror



Fig. 2. 23. A mirror fixed in the main lounge and Fresco painting around it. Photo by author April 2016

There are a few examples of the unique aesthetic taste of the Sethi family who were not only owners of these huge mansions, but also left no stone unturned in decorating their living places cum business centers.

The main lounge on left side of the atrium, now used as the main sitting room, is richly decorated with beautiful mirror work and the objects displayed are from Central Asia, especially China.

There are many such precious and antique pieces displayed at the Cheeni Khanas of this Haveli that might have cost the owners a lot even at the time of purchase. A few mirrors that are fixed on the walls of the lounge further enhance the beauty and grandeur of the sitting area. The beautiful use of shades of gold and small mirrors, gives a shiny look which is further beautified by the floral mosaics on the walls of the lounge. This is an example of the pottery pieces that are displayed in the Haveli even now. This pot is richly decorated with marble and metal inlay with intricate floral motives and a metal handle. All the members of

the Sethi family had to travel to Central Asia for business activities. This, coupled with the fact that they were of an artistic nature, made them the biggest collectors of these unique artefacts.



Fig. 2. 24. Mirror fixed in a boarder of jewel like mirror work, photo by researcher. 2015



Fig. 2. 25. Detail of a Pot. Photo by researcher July 2016





Fig.2. 26. Collection of Rabia Sethi, photograph Saleem Afzal. July 2016

We can judge the aesthetic taste of the Sethis by these collections, walls, which are decorated with mirror mosaics, fresco paintings and *Cheeni khanas*. The unique architectural features are a combination of multiple cultures. These objects are also collected by the Sethis from different areas of the world. As reported by Rabia Sethi the big chandeliers in the lounge used as sitting room was imported from Russia.



Fig. 2. 27. A chandelier in lounge. Photograph by Saleem Afzal July 2016

Rabia Sethi also said that such kind of beautiful chandeliers were a part of all the Sethi Havelis in the Sethi Mohallah and further enhanced the beauty of the buildings. We can also notice the beautifully painted Ceiling of the room.

#### **2. 14. Haji Ayub Sethi Haveli:**

This *Haveli* is situated on the left side of the Sethi Street, exactly opposite to the Rabia Sethi *Haveli*, in Sethi Street. One of the cousins of Miss Rabia Sethi is residing in this Haveli along with his family. So it was difficult to convince the owner to give us a view of the interior of the *Haveli*, however he agreed to take us in till the atrium of the *Haveli*.

The big folding entrance gives this Sethi *Haveli* a different look and the owner has done a lot of changes in the building according to the comfort and convenience of the family.



Fig. 2. 28. Outer view of the haveli. Photo by author 2016

Mr Younas Sethi gave this information that the entrance was kept different because bogies of *Sethis* were parked in this *Haveli* on which they used to take a round of the city as mentioned earlier.



Fig.2. 29. Inner view of the gate. Photo by author July 2016

These Sethi Havelis with their remaining structures and ornamentation tell a lot about the lifestyle of the owners.



Fig.2. 30. Terrace of the haveli opening in atrium. Photograph by author. July 2016

We were allowed only till the atrium, so we were able to take a few pictures of the Haveli. The person residing in the Haveli was either ignorant or reluctant to give information about the history of the family. But he was the one who guided us about Mr Saleem Sethi for detailed information about the history of the Sethi Haveli.

## **2. 15. Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi, *Mardan Khana* (special place for the male):**

As mentioned earlier, this is a portion of the Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh, which was a part of the main Haveli in the custody of the Archaeology department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa now. Originally they were single unit, but later, after the death of Haji Karim Bakhsh and after facing all the losses by Haji Ayub Sethi, it was divided in two portions. *Mardan Khana* was owned by Haji Hafiz Ayub Sethi and *Zanan Khan* was given to the Haji Hafiz Allah Bakhsh Sethi. The *Mardan Khana* is owned by a person who occasionally comes in this Haveli and does not allow anyone to enter it so the only pictures were taken from outside and no oral information was available.



Fig. 2 .31. Outer view of Mardan Khana Entrance.  
Photo by Author. July 2016



This portion is almost attached with the *Zanan Khana* of the *Haveli* and we can see the railing of *Zanan Khana*. But for sure, these two *Havelis* or parts of the *Havelis* are connected from inside. The original owner built it connected to each other for business purpose as well as convenience. They were keeping the money or Russian rubble in the *Haveli* so it was easy for them to manage the currency in both portions.



Fig. 2. 32. Detail of arch at the entrance with glazed stucco Photo by Author. July 2016

When Haji Ayub Sethi left Peshawar and wanted to establish his business in India he gave his portion of the building to Jewish businessmen working in Peshawar and that became the main reason of the deterioration of the building. But when he came back to Peshawar he got the *Haveli* vacated and his family started living in this *Haveli*. Present residents of the *Haveli* have not allowed us to enter the house, so only pictures were taken from outside.

## 2. 16. Outer views of different *Havelis* in Peshawar especially in Qissa Khwani bazaar:

It is almost impossible to document all the *Havelis* in Peshawar, because the walled city is filled with these *Havelis*, and each of these is a wonder of art and architecture with splendid history attached to it.

Following are the outer views of a few *Havelis* in Peshawar in Qissa Khwani Bazar.

There are many buildings in this famous traditional bazaar that are masterpieces of arch liberal beauty, especially the projected *Jharokas*, either in wood or in bricks.



Fig. 2. 33. View of a haveli in Qissa Khwani bazar. Photo by Author. July 2016

The walled city of Peshawar has beautiful traditional *Havelis* at almost every turn of every street. These *Havelis* not only reflect the financial condition of the owner but also tells us a lot about the aesthetic and intellectual status of the owner. They generally are a combination of Hindu, Muslim and British style of construction in general, but sometimes it reflects influences from Central Asian architectural elements.

Peshawar being a center of Business had a lot of travelers from other countries, which became the main reason for importing these foreign influences. However, the important point to be noted here is that these old buildings should be taken care of as not only residences but as treasures of art and architecture. These Havelis possess immense potential and can be utilized as a source of increasing tourism in the country.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORY OF THE *SETHI* FAMILY

As a normal course of time, people live their lives and move to their final destination leaving their history behind for others to learn lesson and taking advantage from that. It would be inevitable to discuss and document the buildings of *Sethis* before knowing the history of *Sethi* family. As the time moved on the *Sethis* also went through the same process of movement from this world to the eternal, and the sad part is that there is hardly any authentic oral or documented information available with the members of the *Sethi* family. The greatest constraint in the research was that the members of the *Sethi* family who own the havelis do not have any information about their ancestors. They hardly know the names of their grand grandparents, who really left a big treasure for them in shape of these tremendous buildings. That is the biggest reason of motivation for this research, that these enormous treasures of *Sethi* family, their family history, their architectural, social and mega business (having international importance) achievements should be documented in detail.

However little works has already been done by a few researchers who tried to gather some facts related to the *Sethi* family. One more problem that was faced during this research was, that the information provided by different people about the *Sethis* was contradictory. Most of the information has been gathered through oral sources. Some elderly members and contributive personalities of *Sethi* family provided information related to the family and some unpublished books were also a great source of information in this regard. But still the ignorance of very near and dear of the *Sethi* family was a point of astonishment that they hardly knew anything about their ancestors. But they are enjoying living in these royal complexes, which are a result of their ancestors' careful creation of decorated and comfortable dwellings.

Mr. Saleem Sethi a retired Civil servant of Pakistan has been kind enough to share some quite authentic information with an unpublished book of his father Muhammad Yunas Sethi, who really contributed this book after research.

Peshawar which is considered one of the oldest cities that went through cultural and civilizational destruction but reemerged with a new zeal every time with a fresh cultural and civilization progression.

### **3. 1. The *Sethis*:**

Indian merchants travelled widely and associated themselves with powerful patrons, this relationship was fostered with ritualistic gift giving, sponsoring of philanthropic works and participation in public ceremonies and rituals (Palsetia 2005: 493-527). The merchants consciously developed political relationship to the ruling elites to become urban elites of the city (King 2009: 471- 488).

The origination of word *Sethi* from Sanskrit word '*Sresthin*' meaning, head of a business class. This title *Sethi* was given to them from the people of Peshawar, when they emerged as prosperous businessmen (Dani 1969. 177).

In gazetteer of Peshawar city '*Arora*' is listed as a Hindu Clan and written that they were the most successful businessmen of Peshawar city (NWFP Gazetteer Peshawar Dist. 1931. Statistical vol. B, P XXVIII). *Arora* stood for *Rore* and was dropped to *Arora Sethis* from *Rore Sethis*. It is therefore believed that the same *Rore Sethis* before embracing Islam, the same term *Sethi* has been used for the owners of *Sethi mohallah*. The *Sethis* built twelve havelis in *mohallah* called *Kucha*<sup>39</sup> *Sethian* from the late 19th century. Out of the twelve havelis constructed, seven survived in their original form. These as artifacts can be used to study the prevalent culture, its productions, the changes that it underwent and the material that it used to express itself (Grabar 1983: 1-14).

In early 18<sup>th</sup> century (the dates are arbitrary based on the oral information, lot of controversy in dates) Sethis lived in Bhera,<sup>40</sup> a town near Sargodha in Punjab at the bank of river Jehlam. *Behra* centrally located at the base of Potohar plateau connecting the region of Punjab to Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia served as a major trade center, from Bhera they primarily exported indigo to Central Asia (Hanifi 2008). They lived in

---

<sup>39</sup> The streets that connect the area with the other streets of an enclave

<sup>40</sup> The residing members of the Sethi havelis are also not sure about the construction dates of the enormous buildings

the *Mohallah* Hakim (herbal doctors). The family is respected mainly for two reasons one that they were true believers' of Islam, in theory and in practice also, secondly they were well established rich International businessmen of the area. The history of the *Sethis* living in Bhera changed with the rise and dominance of Sikhs in the region (oral information by Mr Yusaf Sethi and Saleem Sethi) eminent members of Sethi family. India's trade via *Khyber* was dominated by *Shikarpuri* and Multani merchant firms settled and operating from Peshawar since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Levi 1999: 483-512).

It is important to discuss a little about the history of the land where Sethis lived. Starting from the last Mughal king Aurangzeb, who was known for his command and governance of a large empire with his intellect, his successor from Mughal Empire were quite weak, so Mughal Empire resulted in crumbling into parts (Cunningham, 1955. 83). At this point of times 'Sikhs a depressed Sect, rose on the political scene up till this movement they were struggling, peacefully living in villages (Ibid).

During the invasions of Nadir Shah the Sikhs formed small bands and plundered the Persian army and rich inhabitants who fled towards the hills from massacre at Delhi. So the result was that Muslims started losing their strong hold and Sikhs became bold (Imtiaz 1996. 12).

The Sethi mohallah developed as Dhal lan a large *umarah* havelis dating from Mughal era, which had been occupied by Durrani nobles in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Jaffar 2008: 74). This elite neighborhood was considered a safe part of the city and became inhabited by rich Hindu merchants during the turbulent Afghan and later Sikh eras (Oral information by Sethis).

Ahmad Shah Abdali became the successor and king of Afghanistan after Nadir Shah, when he was assassinated in A.D 1747. From A.D. 1747 – 1762 Ahmad Shah crossed the Indus six times to straighten the affairs in Delhi, Lahore and Sirhind. In 1762 he gave Sikhs a crushing defeat, killing almost with a loss of twelve to twenty five thousand lives (Cunningham 1955: 83- 92).

Discussion related to the land history of the *Sethis* would help understand their life style and the reasons for their movement from Bhera to Peshawar. Ahmad Shah crossed the river Indus six times to look into the

situation of affairs in Delhi, Lahore and Sirhand. At the same time in 1762 he crushed the Sikhs and as record 12 to 20 five thousand lives were lost from Sikhs (ibid 83). The rout of the disaster is still called ‘*Ghulu Ghara*’ or great disaster. But still Sikhs were having great ranks. They had a revengeful behavior targeting specially Afghans and Muslims. They marched in Sirhand in Dec 1763. Governor Zain Khan was killed and defeated. After this victory plains of Sirhind, from Sutlej to Jamna were occupied by Sikhs (Ibid).

“Traditions still described how the Sikhs dispersed as soon as the battle was won, and how riding day and night, each horse man would through his belt and scabbard, his articles of dress, and accoutrements, until he was almost backed into successive villages to mark them as his, Sirhind itself was totally destroyed “(Ibid). Ahmad Shah decided to come seventh time across the Indus into India. But he could not stay long enough to completely shatter the Sikh opposition. Disturbances in Afghanistan called him back soon.”

After this departure, Sikhs were ejected to ‘Kabalimat’, the Governor of Lahore and the whole region from Jhelum to Sutlej was partitioned among Sikh chiefs or their followers. The plains of Sirhind were divided a year before. “Numerous mosques were demolished and Afghans in chains were made to wash the foundations with the blood of the hogs. From 1764 the Sikhs were not interfered with for two years. They used this short interval in organizing their actual powers and possessions. “Their system resolved itself into theocratic confederate feudalism with all the confusion and uncertainty attendant upon a triple alliance of the king in society half barbarous. God was their helper and only judge” (Cunningham 1955: 94-95). During their rising time in Punjab Sikhs did a lot of construction and destruction. They destroyed a lot of Muslim buildings and used them in their own religious buildings. Whereas rich Sikhs built a lot of *havelis* in Punjab using local material and Mughal influences. ‘Sukershukias’ or Sukershikias<sup>41</sup> lived in Ravi and Chanab. These formed the 9<sup>th</sup> Misl (an Arabic word for alike, there were 12 in number and had one Sardar) (Gupta

---

<sup>41</sup>The Sukerchakia Misl was one of 12 Sikh Misls in Punjab during the 18th century concentrated in Gujranwala and Hafizabad district in Western Punjab (in modern-Pakistan) and ruled from (1752-1801).

1944: 97). The Sukreshukias Misl was ruled by Ranjit Singh's grandfather 'Charat Singh'. Bhera the town where Sethis lived had become a part of the misl. Ever since Bhera had become a part of the territory held by the 9<sup>th</sup> misl, Life for Muslims had become a nightmare. One of the favorite hobby of the Sikh soldiers was throwing buckets of filth on Muslims *Ulemas* (religious experts), so Sethis had to flee from Bhera (information by Mr Yusaf Sethi from Decorative wood work in *Mohallah Sethian Journal of Central Asia* Vol XIX, No 1 July 1996 pg 13). For Sethis life under any Muslim ruler was safe, so they preferred to move to Chamkani a town nearby Peshawar. There was another reason for this movement one was security and the other was that the elderly people of the family had their Murshid<sup>42</sup> (saintly religious guides) moving to the same place. North West Frontier appeared an appropriate direction to take where Ahmad Shah Abdali always met with victory. In 1764, it seemed that even if Sikhs could rule Punjab, they will not be able to cross Attock and win from Afghans. Roughly around this time in history, in the year 1764 or so, they left Bhera and immigrated to Chamkani, a little town situated on the out skirts of Peshawar, the grand Trunk Road, and historical highway of Sher Shah Suri, passed by. When the Sethis arrived in Chamkani, the great *Sufi* Saint *Shaikh* Umar was alive and lived there (Information by Mr Yusaf Sethi and Saleem Sethi). Sethis placed themselves in his protection and were their disciples. As Chamkani was on Grand Trunk Road, from where the traditional Caravans passed to and from Peshawar. It is pertinent that Sethis must have started their trade while they were still in Chamkani. Life was safe and their trade prospered. They started to look at their future with hope. During the 26 years of Ahmad Shah Abdali's vigorous and active rule, the plains of Peshawar were brought under more complete control. He respected the great Sufi saints of Chamkani Hadrat *Shaikh* Umar and sought guidance from him. The great king himself was also of the saint's disciple (Qudsi 1966: 455). It is quite possible that the Sethis got a letter of introduction from Hadrat Umar to the Royal court. It must have been with kings permission and blessing that they shifted inside the Peshawar city. One of the leading business centers was Ganj gate 9 (Information by Yusaf Sethi). This was the first place of residence that family acquired inside the Peshawar city. They continued their trading and their

---

<sup>42</sup> Murshid is considered a religious guide specially in Sufism



business flourished. People of Peshawar believed and they still believe that the reason for their being so successful in business was their fair dealing and reasonable profit margin and believed in helping the poor and doing social work. Ahmad Shah Abdali ruled well. There was peace and prosperity in the region which provided an excellent climate for the success of business. Ahmad Shah died and his son Taimur Shah succeeded him in 1773. Three years later in 1776, the great saint Shaikh Hadrat Umar also passed away (Qudsi 1966 455). The Sethis lost their parent saint, and region lost a great king. The situation in Peshawar valley changed. Taimur Shah was indolent. He could not maintain discipline (NWFP Gazetteer 1931: 48). During this reign *Pathan* chiefs were engaged in constant feud between themselves. Agriculture was neglected. Consequently the region had become unsafe for trading caravans. That must have affected the Sethis too. Taimur Shah died in 1793. His throne was left to be contested by his sons. The struggle and adventure of these princes make a confusing chapter of Peshawar's history. Shah Shuja the last of Saddozai dynasty, proclaimed himself a king in Peshawar and attempted to gather the Pathan tribes of the frontier to his standard, He fought a pitched battle near Tahkal on Jamrud road. By 1809 he gained an entry into the city. The same year he received the British Mission headed by Mount- Stuart Elphinston (ibid 48). Sometimes later Shah Shuja was thrown out by his brother Mahmud Shah. During all these disturbances, Peshawar remained in a constant state of excitement and upheaval. The possession of the city passed from one ruler to another with bewildering frequency. No ruler stayed long enough to be able to exercise any control over the tribes of the valley who enjoyed practically complete independence. The caravan routes had become unsafe. Trading must have suffered. Resultantly the Sethi family business must have been affected too.

Shah Shuja after many deviations found at last a resting place under British protection in Ludhiana in 1815 (ibid 49). Even though, the business was affected, in such social and political conditions, the city was comparatively a safer place to reside than out in the suburbs at Chamkani. The Sethi elders seemed to have made all decisions well and moved away from the eminent disasters at right moment. So far once again the family felt the need for a better and safe accommodation.

Attock fell to Ranjit Singh in 1814. In 1818, a Sikh army advancing on Peshawar overran the country as far as the foot hills (ibid 49). The *Sethis* had left *Bhera* to save themselves from this very menace, but the fate had it following them here too. The only positive factor was that in 1818, they were safer inside the Peshawar city. Had they been out at *Chamkani*, they might have not lived to build this suburb house.

The purpose of discussing the history is that instability in the political situation surely affected the trade and commerce situation in the area, which influenced the settlement process of Sethi family in the area. Azim Khan of Afghanistan determined to try his strength and marched with a large army from Kabul to Peshawar. The Sikhs crossed Indus to meet him. At about this time Haji Ilahi Bakhsh's son Haji Ahmad Gul must have started the construction of the first house in Mohallah Sethian. The date of completion written on top of the entrance door of his house is 1832. Even if it took ten years to complete the house, the process of construction must have started in 1823. This was the time when Azim Khan of Afghanistan's army faced Ranjit Singh's force at Pir Sabaq near Nowshera. Brother of Samad Khan was sent to raise the Yusufzai and Khattak clans while he himself with his regular troops moved out of Peshawar (ibid 49-50). On his arrival at Nowshera, on his arrival he found Samad Khan was already engaged with the Sikhs on the level land near Pir Sabaq. The Pathans fought with desperate valour. The Sikhs had almost lost the day, but Ranjit Singh himself seized a standard and plunged into thickest of the battle. He relied on his men for a final charge. The last stand was made on the sunset by a party of two hundred Yusufzais, who died fighting to a man. In this battle ten thousand Pathans are said to have lost their lives for their region.

Sardar Azim Khan and Sardar Dost Muhammad Khan went back to Kabul, Attock, Chamkani and the entire Peshawar valley fell under the Sikh army's plundering onslaught. The Sethi family had better chances of surviving such an attack inside the Peshawar city.

Ranjit Singh left for Lahore in 1824. At this moment he did not attempt any permanent occupation of Peshawar city. He left the government with Barakzai Sardars of Afghanistan. At Pir Sabak he had shown them his strength. Now by withdrawing to Lahore despite victory, he offered friendship. He used all his political acumen in keeping the Afghan kings away from Sayed Ahmad Shahid, whose followers were

strong in the Peshawar valley and had become a threat for Ranjit Singh's ambitious struggle for Sikh power. He succeeded in his aim (ibid 50). By 1830, two years before Haji Gul's residence at *Mohallah Sethian* was completed, Mujahidin of Sayed Ahmad Shaheed had left Peshawar. All this time between 1824 and 1830, which Ranjit Singh used to cleverly weed out the Sayed Ahmad Shahid's movement, Haji Ahmad Gull spend to construct a better and safer accommodation for his family. He probably sensed the disaster ahead.

The houses at *Mohallah Sethian* are designed in such a way that they offer maximum security. There is a good distance between the entrance and the inner door in almost all the havelis of Sethis. In between is a confusing corridor that leads to multiple destinations in the haveli e.g. Rooms, basement or central courtyard. As a tradition of big havelis the entrance door is elaborately decorated with carving. Almost all the houses have the same kind of facade in many houses of Peshawar city or even havelis in Rawalpindi also have the same kind of carved doors like entrance of Soojan Singh haveli in Rawalpindi and Khem Bedi Singh haveli at Kallar Sayedan. So from outside no one can guess the decorative style of the haveli or the style of construction. Generally these havelis exhibit a lot about the personal taste and social wellbeing of the owner. If we look at the history of these enormous havelis we will come to know that these were safe places for keeping the wealth of the owners and also residents were safe in this building at times of riots or other disturbances in the city.

Although the government in Peshawar was left with Afghan kings and Ranjit Singh had left for Lahore in 1824, he insisted on taking a yearly tribute from the inhabitants of the Peshawar valley. The city was spared, but the Peshawar valley witnessed a devastating chapter of their history. Ranjit Singh appointed Hari Singh Nalwa, his notorious general to collect the tribute. A force of twelve thousand troops would march to the Peshawar valley once a year (ibid 50). On these annual marches Sikh soldiers will indulge in the most reckless depredation. "Their approach through the district was the signal for the removal of property and valuables. Even the windows and door knobs were not left safe. Crowds of women and children would flee frightened from their homes and villages and the entire country seemed an emigrating colony. Sikh soldiers will cut even fruit trees to provide fuel to their camps. The famous Peshawar gardens were

destroyed in this manner”. Hari Singh Nalwa was remembered as the most tyrannical oppressor even till the British rule. It is said that his name was used as a bogey to frighten a crying child baby would freeze into silence. These conditions continued for several years (oral information by the locals).

Now the well-designed havelis of Sethis were a result of the work of crafts man and *misteries* and artisans of Punjab and Kashmir regions (Qizilbash 1991: 83). The use of these decorative arts patronized by Mughals and Durranies show the Sethi family’s desire to create an identity through architectural and visual elements (hardgrove 2002: 323-364).

The house of Haji Gull Ahmad was completed in 1832. It was a simple, solid and secure house. It did not have any extravagant decor. It exhibited no wealth. It was a house where family could live a quiet and simple life away from any prominence least of all fame of being Sethis and waited for the Sikhs to depart. The family had settled in this house barely three years, when in 1835, Peshawar city was occupied by the Sikhs (Imtiaz1966: 50- 51). Following this onwards a very unhappy period for the people of the city. The money that rich families had made, must have been hidden in their cellars. To show wealth was asking for ruination. The Arabs the Chiefs of Mohmand and Khalil clans could not tolerate Sikh occupation of their territory. They went across the border and from there organized raiding bands which roamed about Peshawar valley. Travelling had become unsafe. This meant no trading for any one including the Sethi family. In April 1837, a great battle was fought around Jamrud and in the Khyber Pass between Dost Muhammad Khan of Afghanistan and Hari Singh Nalwa, Hari Singh was killed. Despite his death, Sikhs continued to rule Peshawar.

An Italian, a general of Sikh army ‘Avitabila’ whom Pathans<sup>43</sup> called ‘ *Abutabela*’ , became Governor of Peshawar from 1838 to 1842. He constructed a pavilion at ‘Gor Gathree’ the Governor’s residence of that time a few yards walk from Haji Ahmad Gull house, and ruled Peshawar from there. He was a ruthless administrator. He punished savagely. Under the Sikh regime, the maintenance of internal order was scarcely

---

<sup>43</sup> Pushto speaking inhabitants of Peshawar

attempted. Blood feuds between the villages and families' led to pitched battle in broad day light, but the government only interfered to inflict a fine. Raids from across the border would accrue frequently. The Sikhs refused to consider disturbances not directed against themselves as casting any discredit on their rule (ibid 53). Government troops were mostly held in reserve at Peshawar with a few outposts at Shabqadar and Bara post. Ranjit Singh died in 1839. With his death, the idea of a strong Sikh state began to dissolve.

In 1846 after the first Sikh war, Sardar Gulab Singh was appointed Governor on behalf of the Darbar of Delhi and Major George Lawrence represented the resident at Lahore (ibid 89). The British found the first foothold in Peshawar. Now they waited for the opportune moment to occupy the seat of power. 1848, after the second Sikh war, the Sikh war, the Sikhs surrendered to the British. In the month of November 1848, Dost Muhammad Khan dispatched an army of twelve thousand men from Kabul under his half-brother, the Nawab Jabbar Khan and took possession of Peshawar. He retained it, for a short time. In March 1849, when the troops under Sir Walter Gilbert GCB arrived at Peshawar, they met no opposition from the Afghans (Dani 1969. Raverty quoted in Khyber mail press).

Raverty, who came here with the British occupation forces, has left a detailed account of the city of his time, the Peshawar of 1850. In 1850, the Sethis were ordinary successful businessmen. Their houses were solid and simple like any other good house in Peshawar of that time. Till 1850, Sethi houses had not acquired their unusual and distinct decor. This was added to these later on during the British rule.

Despite occasional small skirmishes with the surrounding tribes who insisted on maintaining their independence, British managed to govern Peshawar in peace. The prosperity again prevailed. They made permanent arrangements to keep the Khyber Pass open and policed by tribesmen themselves. After negotiations, a complete *Jirgah*<sup>44</sup> of all the Khyber Afridis arranged an agreement with British government in February 1881. Two important features of this agreement were:

---

<sup>44</sup> decision committee of the wise men of the area

1. The independence of Afridis was recognized but on their part, the tribesmen agreed to maintain exclusive political relations with the British government.
2. The tribe was to furnish crops of 'Jazalchis' for the protection of caravans on their way through the Pass. Afridis themselves undertook to maintain order in Khyber Pass (NWFP Gazetteer 1931 84).

In 1891, there were skirmishes between Afridis and the British government. The details of these events are not worth mentioning for the scope of this study (ibid 85). The Afridis made final submission in March 1889. In December 1899 British government withdrew the regular troops from the Khyber and the protection of the pass was entrusted to the Khyber Rifles. These had grown out of the Jazalchi which the Afridis had provided in 1881. From this date until 1905, no event of any importance occurred to disturb the friendly relation between the Afridis and the British government. All these important details related to the political and strategically important and business routes are mentioned here to provide the actual state of Peshawar when Sethi family established in Peshawar. In 1908 there was minor friction between the Afridis and the British government, but the Afridis had to submit. After this brief event, peace prevailed between all sections of Afridis and British government. The caravan route generally remained safe. The trading flourished (ibid 85). It was during this period, from 1881 to 1930, that Sethi family amassed most of their wealth and earned themselves the name of Sethi (the richest). It was during this time that their houses were redecorated with superb wood work and exquisite embellishments using genuine gold leaf and brilliant colours. For remarkable blue genuine Lapis Lazuli rock was crushed into fine powder, mixed with another substance and used as colour. This was the time when the city of Peshawar prospered again. Its inhabitants felt safe enough to enjoy their wealth. The Sethis too could afford to live in houses fit enough for royalty and they did just that. At this point in history the Sethis established an impressive network of efficiently managed business offices and residences in many countries. In Iran their central business office was in Mashhad in *Kucha Agha Nustrat Shah, Payan Khayaban*. This office was close to the door of the tomb of <sup>45</sup>'Imam Raza' (information by Mr Yusaf Sethi). From Iran the business office towards Russian border was

---

<sup>45</sup> The Twelve Imams are the spiritual and political successors to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, and Imam Raza is the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims.

at 'Asadabad'. The central office in Russia was in Moscow. Branch offices were in 'Vladivostok' and 'Brunsi', in China, the Sethis central trading office in Kabul, a big garden at Tashkergan call *Peshawari Bagh* with a residence inside. They had office in Mazaar Sharif, Dushanbe, Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent. They had developed excellent contacts with British government and Hindu business community. They would issue *Hundis*<sup>46</sup> (pronotes) mostly to British employees (NWFP Gazetteer 1931).

The Sethis never forget Bhera, their old place of residence. There next to Mona horse- farm (Remount depot) they built a huge garden called, *Rehmani Bagh*. The family used to go there for relaxation as recently as Mr Yusuf Sethi's childhood. Later on it was sold. The family owned business houses in Multan, Karachi and Bombay. The Karachi house was near Quaid-i-Aram's childhood home where the Quaid was born. The Sethis build a mosque there called 'Akhund Mosque' and dedicated it to public use. Sethi's had a tradition of constructing mosques and public facilitation buildings like bridges and lakes. Their Bombay house was in *Bhindi* bazar and the building was called *Khudada Munzil*. In England the central trading office was at 78 Thomas Street, E.C. 4, London. All these trading offices were linked with the central Peshawar office at *Mohallah Sethian* (NWFP Gazetteer 1931). So Sethi haveli also acted as a central trading office for Sethi business. Mrs Rubina Imtiaz Qizilbash records in her research paper published in 'Journal of Central Asia' titles "Decorative woodwork in *Mohallah Sethian*" that the central office which has become the residence of Mrs Manzur Sethi, where she saw a desk with different drawers. Each drawer had carved on it, the name of a city. Mrs Manzur Sethi told her that when the post would arrive, it was kept in the drawer bearing the name of the city it came from. This way, the sorting was done as soon as the documents were received, saving much time and not risking any displacement (Qizilbash 1996. 21).

In 1930, a serious situation arose between Afridis and the British government. Twice Afridis accumulated a large *Lashkar* and tried to Conquer Peshawar city. Ten thousand Afridis crossed into the district Peshawar on June, 5, 1930 and organized their camps in the South and north of Peshawar with the intension to attack.

---

<sup>46</sup> A Hundi is a financial instrument that developed in Medieval India for use in trade and credit transactions. Hundis are used as a form of remittance instrument to transfer money from place to place, as a form of credit instrument.

British government bombed Khajuri plains and killed their women and children. By August seventh a second attempt was made by Afridis to capture Peshawar. This time they came in <sup>47</sup>*Lashkar* of five thousand and reached the edge of the foot hills (Gazetteer of NWFP 1931, 87). They planned to attack the airport, cantonment and central jail. The attack was repulsed by the British forces with considerable casualties. Two hundred Afridis were martyred. Due to these events the trading route to Peshawar was blocked temporarily, but the Sethis had established their business network well. Business in other branches continued. An occasional messenger could still arrive keeping the central office in Peshawar informed. By this time, they might have even employed them as guards to provide protection to their commodities enrooted to Peshawar. Towards interior Hindustan, up to Bombay, railway had been installed. The transportation of goods had become safer, quicker and cheaper.

After these events British government took certain measures so that the entry of Afridis into the administrative territory of Peshawar district could be denied. Two British posts were created at 'Khajuri' and Akakhahe plains manned by troops with a network of connecting roads. Afridis agreed to let the British troops have unrestricted access up to the foothills (interview with Rabia Sethi).

After this the Afridis were kept in control. The city of Peshawar and the trade route was safe again.

The Sethi family traded in tea from Shanghai, cotton, cloth and indigo from Multan. From Afghanistan they brought dry fruit and carpets. Chinese green tea was traded at Bokhara via Vladivostok and Brunsu. The old Gazetteer of 1883 on page 215, records the list of goods that were traded through the bazaars of Peshawar. This list more or less corresponds to the above list given by Sethi brothers (information by Mr Yusuf Sethi and Mr Ismail Sethi).

It is evident that the Sethi family members were well- travelled. They were exposed to the east and the west. Their sensibilities had to live happily with this infusion. When eventually, they undertook to improve their house in Peshawar Mohallah Sethian, it is quite natural that this infusion was expressed in its decor. In

---

<sup>47</sup> A group of warriors.



general it can be said about Sethis that some members of the Sethi family frequently started visiting Peshawar for business purposes and started having relations with Hazrat Ibrahim's sons ( who were from a famous Sufi family) in Chamkani. Some members of the Sethi family started business activities with traders from Afghanistan and Bokhara. Peshawar which was an important center of education and culture during Buddhist period went through a downfall but reestablished during Mughal period. This enhanced the trade activities in the area, because Mughals had some areas of Afghanistan under their influence and started trading with them. So some members of Sethis family opted to live in Chamkani and did business in Peshawar and later shifted to Peshawar for living and business.

Muhammad Akram's house was the first house that was built in the *kucha Sethian* during 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was a small house in a narrow street and the size of the haveli was also not appropriate to be called as haveli. It was kept vacant for a long period of time after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was not lavishly decorated so served as servant quarters for the Haji Karim Bakhsh *Zanan khana* and was abandoned in 1950 and many parts including the roofs collapsed (interview of Sohail Sethi by Samra Khan).

Before moving on to the great achievement in the field of Construction the contribution of Sethi houses in Peshawar it is appropriate to discuss the family tree of Sethis that has been contributed by Mr. Muhammad Yunas Sethi, who has carefully compiled this family tree or <sup>48</sup>*Shajra-i-Nasb* of Sethi family. It was provided in Urdu in his unpublished book in Urdu '*Peshawar ka Sethi Khandan, mukhtaser ehwal*' which deals with the details of Sethi descendants and their contributions. This tree has been translated into English.

### **3.2. Family of *Sethis***

Mian Hafiz Ghulam Ahmad (1651- 1714)

Mian Hafiz Fazal Ahmad (1681- 1753)

Mian Hafiz Zia ud din (1708-1777)

---

<sup>48</sup> Family tree

Mian Hafiz Shahab ud din (1736- 1806)

Mian Hafiz Muhammad Akram (1765- 1833)

Mian Haji Hafiz Karam Bakhsh (1796- 1863)

Mian Haji Hafiz Ilahi Bakhsh (1829- 1896)

Mian Haji Hafiz Karim Bakhsh Sethi (5<sup>th</sup> June 1861- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 1930)

**Mian Haji Hafiz Karim Bakhsh Sethi (5th June 1861- 3rd Dec 1930)**

Haji Hafiz Allah Bakhsh Sethi (1896- 1980)

Haji Hafiz Muhammad Ayub Sethi (1898- 1979)

Haji Ghulam Farid Sethi (1900- 1911)

**Haji Hafiz Muhammad Ayub Sethi (1898- 1979)**

Maryam Sethi

Haji Muhammad Yusaf Sethi, Begum Umatulla Sethi

Haji Muhammad Younas Sethi, Begum Farida Sethi

Abdul Wadood Sethi, Begum Mehboob Sultan Sethi

Nisar Ahmad Sethi, Begum Naseem Sethi

Mushtaq Ahmad Sethi

Hafiz Haji Manzoor Ahmad Sethi, Begum Amna Sethi

Dr Naseem Sethi

Masood Ahmad Sethi

**Haji Muhammad Yusaf Sethi, Begum Umatullah Sethi**

Sakina

Amina Sethi

Ghulam Dastgeer Sethi, Begum Bano Sethi

Ghulam Moeen uddin Sethi, Begum Shazia Sethi

Muhammad Irfan Sethi, Begum Aniqah Sethi

**Haji Muhammad Younas Sethi, Begum Farida Sethi**

Hamida Rasheed

Zahida

Shahida Chishti

Muhammad Saleem Sethi, Begum Nargis Sethi

Dr Muhammad Naeem Sethi, Begum Bushra Sethi

**Abdul Wadood Sethi, Begum Mehboob Sultan Sethi**

Muhammad Daood Sethi, Begum Farha Sethi

Muhammad Suleman Sethi, Begum Shazia Sethi

Muhammad Aawais Sethi, Begum Nayar Sethi

Muhammad Yahya Sethi

Atiya Sethi

**Nisar Ahmad Sethi, Begum Naseem Sethi**

Bilquis Sethi

Nighat Sethi

Ijaz Ahmad Sethi

**Hafiz Haji Manzoor Ahmad Sethi, Begum Amna Sethi**

Kaniz Fatima

Mansoor Ahmad Sethi

Bilal Ahmad Sethi

**Dr Naseem Sethi**

Dr Huma Sethi

Dr Sadia Sethi

Dr Muhammad Junaid Sethi, Begum Dr Natashe Sethi

Tahira Hassan

**Ghulam Dastgeer Sethi, Begum Bano Sethi**

Shaharyar Sethi

Ayesah

Najla

**Ghulam Moeen uddin Sethi, Begum Shazia Sethi**

Saima

Kulsoom

Anum

Haji Abdullah

**Muhammad Irfan Sethi, Begum Aniqah Sethi**

Hafiz Muhammad Asad Sethi

Unsa

**Muhammad Saleem Sethi, Begum Nargis Sethi**

Gulmeene Sethi

Palwashe Sethi

**Dr Muhammad Naeem Sethi, Begum Bushra Sethi**

Maniha Sethi

**Muhammad Daood Sethi, Begum Farha Sethi**

Hafiz Zain ul Abiddin

Wajiha

Fiza

**Atiya Sethi**

Hafiz Muhammad Talha Sethi

**Mansoor Ahmad Sethi**

Maliha Sethi

As the word “*hafiz*” is attached to the names of most of the members of the Sethi family, meaning a person who has learnt Quran (the Holy book of Muslims) by heart. As mentioned by Yunas Sethi in his unpublished book “*Peshawar ka Sethi Khandan Mukhtasar Ehwal*” in Urdu, that Sethi family is considered a religious family and were fair in their business dealings, no matter what ever was the nationality of their co business man. That honesty was considered one of the main reasons of their business success.

A detailed family tree has been provided just for the record provided by Mr Younas Sethi in his book.

Main concern of my dissertation is with the art and architecture of Haji Hafiz Karim Bakhsh haveli in Mohallah Sethian, which is now in the custody of department of archaeology Peshawar, and preservation and restoration work is once done by Miss Yasmeen Lari and her team. But still this haveli needs a constant maintenance which Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of archaeology is providing.

### **3. 3. Haji Hafiz Khan Bahadur Karim Bakhsh Sethi:**

It is quite pertinent to mention here about the life of Haji Hafiz Karim Bakhsh Sethi before discussing the art and architecture of his haveli in detail. Peshawar city is not only famous historically but this city has a pride of being called the greatest market of Asia as far as trade and commerce are concerned. This city has been famous as a center of Islamic culture and civilization. Peshawar also has been famous for bringing up famous business and religious personalities. These personalities looked after their business as a religious duty and combined it with social welfare work for only with the motivation of pleasing God. One of the famous personality out of these whose names will live forever because of their good deeds is the name of Haji Hafiz Karim Bakhsh Sethi. He spread his business with social work on one side to Afghanistan, Samarkand and Bokhara, Moscow and London and on the other side his name became famous to Shanghai China. Fair Trade was their profession. Their expended trade became source of progression not only for the family but also became a source of respect for some other families of Peshawar. In general the whole Sethi family was filled with rich and religious people most of whom learnt Quran by heart, but Haji Karim Bakhsh period was the period when the family trade was at its zenith.

### **3. 4. Birth and early life:**

Haji Karim Bakhsh was born on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1861 in Peshawar. From the very beginning he was interested in religious education and he also learnt Quran by heart. He also learnt Arabic and Persian language and read all good writers of these two languages. He used the teachings of great writers as guide line for practical life (oral information by Saleem Sethi).

#### 4. 5. Business of Haji Karim Bakhsh:

Haji Karim Bakhsh gave progression to his ancestral business that the trade relations spread internationally in South East Asia from Shanghai to India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia and to Europe. They earned wealth with fair business. The money was in such a big quantity that instead of counting the money was weighed.

In spite of Haji Karim Bakhsh's wealth, he had property not only in Peshawar but in his ancestral place in Sargodha. He had three big and enormous havelis in Peshawar and dozens of house and business centers in many other countries of the world. Outside the city near Polo ground there was a splendid recreation place, which is known as "Sakhi ka chashma". It had big gardens, fountains, mosques, platforms and trees. He also had some farm houses that were not only used by Sethi family but other inhabitants were also allowed to come and enjoy.

He also had acres of land, gardens, commercial and residential plots in Sargodha. He had a business office and a big house haveli in Bombay. In Karachi he had a big Office and a residence in Kharadar and Clifton. He had many houses in Murree. That is why he is called "richest of the rich" *raees-i-Azam*. For transportation he had many cars, beautiful <sup>49</sup>Bogies and tangas. He was respected in Peshawar so much that, whenever he came out of his haveli on a decorated bogy, people used to rise and say Salam (Muslim greeting meaning peace) just out of respect, which was not only because he was a rich man but he was a kind hearted person. Mian zia ud din an ambassador writes in his book page 11 named "*Aik Pakistani Sifaratar ki yaaddashtein*" (memories of a Pakistani Ambassador) about Sethi family that the view of Karim Bakhsh Sethi's vehicle moving in Qissa Khwani bazar was a breath stopping sight. The way this graceful man was dressed up this whole scene is still un-forgettable for him. He used to go to Peshawar cantt daily on his bogy.

---

<sup>49</sup> Bogis and tangas are pulled by horses

There are many references that quote about personality grandeur of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi. An important personality of Subcontinent a famous politician and an active Muslim league leader Maulana Muhammad Ismail Zabeeh in his Book “Islamabad” on page 1553 writes describing the beauty of the buildings of Peshawar. “Most important *havelis* are in the possession of Sethi family. These havelis are great piece of art and center of interest for tourists”.

An Italian tourist and architect who visited Sethi havelis said “we have lot of treasures of architecture and art in our country but the ceilings of this haveli are really eye catching that one cannot take his eyes away from that”.

### **3. 6. Religious, National and social services of Karim Bakhsh Sethi:**

Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi was a highly religious person, he used to organize various religious meetings in his *Diwan khana* (place for guests). In these religious meetings many respectable religious personalities and saint or Sufis were invited for delivering religious talks. Amongst these famous people were respected Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Mr Sayed Suleman Nadvi, Qibla Sayed Pir Mehr Ali Shah Chishti of Golra Sharif, Mufti Abdul Rahim Popalzai, Maulana Ayub Shah, Maulana Qutab Shah, Maulana Ghulam Muhammad, Sayed Habib Shah, Maulana Gull fakir and Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar. Who were all renowned religious personalities from not only Peshawar but also from Punjab (Sethi: 36).

He had a soft heart for poor needy and spent extensively for the welfare of the poor. The big Sethi always said “this wealth is a property of God and I am supposed to look after and to spend on the needy honestly”. He always considered social welfare as his religious duty (Sethi, Saleem, personal communication, 18 November 2018). He constructed many mosques, bridges, ponds and wells, which still exist, e.g. a famous well in bazar-i-Qallan, A big pond in Mazar Sharif Afghanistan near the tomb.

In Peshawar near Lahori gate a bridge constructed by Mr Ilahi Bakhsh and Ahmad Gull that is still in use.



*Masjid Kucha Sethian* made with red marble is a great contribution of Karim Bakhsh Sethi. The doors of this mosque are a master piece of wood carving. He paid special attention to the decoration of the mosque that same quality of Chandeliers was hanged in the mosque that he selected for his residence.

He not only took the responsibility of construction of mosque in Islamia College Peshawar but also paid for the land used for mosque. This is a Jamia Masjid, which is strong and decorated like old mosques. There is no name plate on the mosque because he never wanted any show off in works of public welfare.

A mosque constructed opposite Peshawar *Yakka toot* gate, old *Eidgah* near Charsadda road which was renovated and extended by Karim Bakhsh Sethi.

*Sethi Sahab* had a big business center in Kabul to monitor business activities of Mizar Sharif and Bokhara. He built a mosque in *Shor bazaar* in Kabul which had an underground <sup>50</sup>*Hamam* to keep the mosque warm in winter by burning fire that is why it is called Masjid-i- Hamam.

Renovation of Masjid Mahabat Khan, during Sikh period the minarets of the mosque were highly damaged. After arrival of British he renovated and reconstructed them.

*Darul masakeen*: Near *bazar-i-yaka toot* it was a <sup>51</sup>religious *madrassa* where children were given religious education.

Construction of Islamia School: In April 1890 he purchased a land and constructed a school.

In spite of all the above mentioned social contributions Karim Bakhsh Sethi also did a lot of work in tribal areas of the province (Younas Sethi: 69).

He was deeply involved religious person who believed that worldly rewards are by God and should be spent sincerely for his people. So along with his business expansion he always spent generously on people welfare. Sethi Sahab went for Haj in 1911. In the middle of nineteenth century an incident occurred and

---

<sup>50</sup> Underground water tank or a pond

<sup>51</sup> An Islamic institution where religious education is provided mostly.

did Bait on the hand of Hazrat Aalah Pir Mehr Ali Shah and it is mentioned in the biography of Pir Sahab named as “Mehr-e-Munir” on page 120- 126. This attachment with the Sufi lineage is still going on. Remaining family members of the Sethi family still go to the shrine of Golra Sharif in Islamabad for prayers.

### **3. 7. Trade and commerce centers of Sethi Karim Bakhsh:**

Sethi Karim Bakhsh’s business activities expanded from East to West and having his central business office in Peshawar but had many sub offices in different countries e.g. Shanghai China, Bombay India, Kharadar Karachi, Afghanistan, Shor bazar Kabul Mazar Sharif, and Kandooz, in Bokhara, Samarkand, Tashkand, And Khior, in Europe, Moscow, London, in Central Asia, Saukul Majeed (Syria), Mashhad-e-Mukaddas (Iran).

In all these places *Sethi Sahab’s* representatives or agents worked for “(K B) Karim Bakhsh Sethi and Sons”. These agents looked after the business, which were not only paid salaries but a share from the profit was also given.

Trade goods were mainly tea and Silk from China, imported to India, Afghanistan, Bokhara and Russia. From India indigo, spices etc. were sent to Afghanistan and central Asia. Russian crockery, chandeliers, fabric and from Afghanistan Qaraquli skin, carpets, Gold coins, gold bricks and fine pure fabric were imported. Due to huge trade relations with Russia a huge amount of Russian currency Rubble in millions was deposited in the head office in Peshawar. This became one of the reasons for the down fall of Sethi business. After Russian revolution, which started in 1917, communist government refused to accept these currency notes by <sup>52</sup>*Zare-e Roos*. So Sethi family had to face a loss of Millions and billions. Their wealth’s major part was wasted. These rubbles are still found in the collection of Sethi family and in the Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli with the department of Archaeology as a record (Sethi, Saleem, personal communication, 18 November, 2018).

---

<sup>52</sup> Kings of Russia were called Zaar e Roos.

### **3. 8. Salient features of down fall of Sethi Business:**

As we have already discussed that Karim Bakhsh Sethi's business expanded in countries with its almost 12 business with many small business centers. But all the business activity was monitored from central office in Peshawar by Karim Bakhsh Sethi himself. His son Haji Allah Bakhsh Sethi was an asthmatic patient so he was not active in business but the other son Haji Muhammad Ayub was a seasoned businessman. He travelled a lot for business purposes but they had agents who monitored their business transactions in other countries and they fully relied on them because it was not possible for them to visit all the business centers. The performance of Haji Ayub Sethi was not the only reason for their down fall there were other reasons too.

#### **1. Russian revolution:**

After Russian revolution, Sethi Sahab had to face a great financial and business loss. New Russian Communist government confiscated all commerce goods and money. So he not only lost a source of profit but a source of business permanently ended. This was a big jerk for his Business Empire and his personality as well, after which he had to redefine his business strategies. With their reduced limited income it was not easy for them to cope with the business expenses and family expenditures and respect.

#### **2. Loss in Shanghai, China:**

Shanghai was an important business center of Karim Bakhsh Sethi from where, tea and other grains were sent to different countries. Before Russian revolution Sethi Sahab used to send trade goods through the Russian harbor Ladi Wasaq for Russia. After the revolution all the goods stored in the go downs of Russia and all the money in the bank were confiscated. During this period tea was exported to India and Afghanistan, which were great centers of trade for Sethi Sahab. However rise and fall in the prices and world trade and less command of Sethi family on business tactics became major reasons of reduction in business.

### **3. Betrayal of agent:**

Some agents started their own business and their lack of interest resulted in the down fall of the Sethi Firm.

### **4. Discovering new avenues of trade:**

Sethi Sahab took a contract of placing wooden bars under the railway line and he took a large area of forest in North eastern province of Afghanistan on lease. The lease was for a longer period of time so he built an enormous residence in Parachinar. Haji Muhammad Ayub Sethi was in charge of this business. Sethi lease was cancelled after one after the other revolutions and throne came in the hands of Nadir Shah.

So not only the token money given to Afghanistan was confiscated but the property and a source of income was also gone forever.

### **5. Loss in tea business:**

Haji Ayub Sethi quoted that after the death of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi an agent told through a telegram that due to the rise and fall in the prices of tea a sudden loss of millions of pounds is expected.

### **6. Down fall in International business market:**

After the death of Karim Bakhsh Sethi there was a constant fall in the international business market and the property prices went very low too. So international business men were not able to cope with losses after selling their properties. This constant decline in prices in international market took the firm of Sethis to an irreparable loss. It resulted in closure of all international business centers run by Sethis. The Firm came under debt, so they had to close Shanghai, Bombay and Karachi business centers. It became inevitable to sell the property and make payments. It was going to be decided that the property should go in the Government custody through Court of Wards, in this way loans will be paid by the income of the property and the property will come back to the owners. But some less wise advisors suggested Haji Allah Bakhsh Sethi to sell the property and pay the dues of the firm, Haji Muhammad Ayub was not in favor of this but he had to listen to his elder brother. Resultantly the property was sold at half the price. Later on Haji Ayub moved to Delhi and established a new business Qaraquli. When most of the property was sold he spoke

against selling of his father's residence and he called Pir Sahab of Golra Sharif for help that instead of selling this house it should be divided in two portions. Inner residential area and connected land was given to Haji Allah Bakhsh and outer portion along with Mehman Khana came in Ayub Sethi, possession. So this is how this haveli was saved from going to strange hands (Younas Sethi: 167).

### **3. 9. Death of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi:**

Haji Karim Bakhsh, who was a deeply religious person, saw wealth, fame and respect at its height but never left his humble and down to earth behaviour. Deep in his heart he always had public welfare as his prime objective. He died on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1930 after a minor ailment. He was not a man but a whole institution within him. He meditated, helped people. He told one day before his death that after his death Quran should be recited extensively and no one should mourn. People of Peshawar still say that big gathering at his funeral was exemplary. They have never seen such a big gathering, which was a result of his personal love and helping attitude and religious personality that so many people attended the funeral.

After the death of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi his two sons Haji Allah Bakhsh Sethi and Haji Ayub Sethi had great responsibility of business to follow, when international market was already going through a lot of rise and fall. It was a hard job to keep up Sethi Karim Bakhsh and sons' high ranking position in these conditions. Haji Allah Bakhsh was not able to participate in business activities due to his health problems. The only hope was Haji Ayub Sethi, who was wise, and business oriented person with the same love for social and religious activities as his father. The elder son Haji Hafiz Allah Bakhsh made some wrong decisions like selling the properties one by one and made the payments, due to his bad health and decision power and lesser command on business strategies. His only son Muhammad Ishaq Sethi studied only till tenth grade and contributed small business activities in the family business (Younas Sethi). He had two sons and four daughters. Both sons died in young age but all the girls survived. Haji Allah Bakhsh Sethi died in 1980 where as his son Muhammad Ishaq Sethi died in 1984. The wife of Muhammad Ishaq Sethi lived in the ancestral house of Haji Allah Bakhsh Sethi till her death in April 2004.

In this situation the only one looking after the family business was Mr Ayub Sethi, who also made a wrong decision by giving his portion of the Sethi house except for residential side to Jewish business men while moving to India for business. He was born in 1898 and was a learned man and a poet and he also had vision of business. His father sent him abroad to look after his business many times. He did Qaraquli skin business in Delhi India for which his father in law trained him. He knew how to categorize these skins according to their quality. From India they were sent to Germany and England by Jew traders for making coats and caps. He employed 650 people in India to clean and categorize the skins. As this business expanded internationally from India he shifted his family to India. He also did business with Sainly zeal.

During world war two the business started to go towards loss so he decided to move to Peshawar and opened a shoe shop and then many other as the shoe business expanded. Haji Ayub Sethi was a very hard working person and worked like a never quitting boxer in business. He was always ready to invest in new business ventures. He brought <sup>53</sup>Ghee from Swat to sell it in Peshawar. Now both brothers Haji Allah Bakhsh and Haji Muhammad Ayub Sethi were living in their father's house in their designated portions but still Ayub Sethi used to see him every day. Ayub Sethi was concentrating on the education of his children as well as taking care of their recreation. They had houses in Murree and Kashmir where they used to go every year with family.

In 1947 the family actively participated in the Freedom movement. Ayub Sethi's daughter Maryam Sethi was an active member of Muslim League Women's wing. He died on March 30, 1979 and we can say that a chapter of rise and fall of Sethi family almost ended.

Ayub Sethi realized the need of education in life so all his children achieved higher education either they became doctors or Civil servants. So in other words very few from the children of Ayub Sethi did business but they reached highest posts in their respective fields.

---

<sup>53</sup> processed butter

I must say that a few people of his family still residing in Sethi havelis Peshawar shared very limited information about the Sethi family. But the greatest source was the unpublished book of Mr Younas Sethi father of Mr Saleem Sethi that provided useful information about the family and confirmed some oral sources that we were able to find in Mohallah Sethian. This is very strange about this family that even elderly people residing now in havelis are ignorant about their family history, they actually know nothing beyond their grandfather. Mr Yunas Sethi has also mentioned at the end of his book that he was not able to gather any authentic information about his family before his great grandfather Mr. Hafiz Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi from him title Sethi the “rich” was started to be used.

The history of Sethi family is filled with the stories of rise and fall of their business and their consistent efforts to restore their business after every failure. It also tells that they had God gifted powers to work hard in business and earn and spend on their own selves and social welfare activities.

## CHAPTER 4

### SETHI HAVELI OF HAJI KARIM BAKHSH SETHI

#### 4. 1. Location of Haji Karim Bakhsh Haveli:

This Haveli is situated at a central place in Sethi Enclave or *Sethi Mohallah* near center of walled city, Peshawar's *Bazaar Kalan* and Gor Gathri, Qissa Khwani Bazar.

*Sethi* business was hence divided between two sons of Ahmad Gull and Elahi Bakhsh Sethi. Karim Bakhsh Sethi was the son of Elahi Bakhsh Sethi, established his independent firm, 'KB Sethi & sons'. Having business offices in London, Russia, India, and Afghanistan and in many other Central Asian countries (Hanifi 2011: 261). He concentrated on his business office, which was running in his haveli in Peshawar and also spent generously on the beauty and comfort in Sethi Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh. This was the time of high colonial period with the increase in *Sethi* family wealth and business (Hanifi 2011: 262).

While coming from Gor Gathri side, just a few meters away comes a street on right that displays the board "*Mohallah Sethian*" meaning Sethi Enclave. After entering from the street there is a mosque that is also known as Sethi mosque and displays typical architectural features that are used in their residential buildings. There is a T shaped street turning to the northern side and at the ending of this T shape street stands this magnificent and beautifully ornamented Sethi Haveli, which is actually the *Zanan Khana* (a place reserved for ladies) of the Haveli. The *Mardan Khana* (a place fixed for gents), while facing the *Zanan Khana* is on the left side. As described earlier the haveli was divided in between two brothers as a solution of a dispute (Hanifi 2011: 263).

The Sethi Haveli under discussion was sold by the owner in 2006 at a very low price for this heritage treasure but that might have fulfilled the need of the Sethi sisters at that time. But they must have regretted at this bad decision later on. This haveli became important when it was taken over by the Khyber



Pakhtunkhwa department of Archaeology. Now it has been restored once and is protected by the employees of the department.



Fig.4 .1. Google map of Sethi haveli pedestrian approach Aerial by Yasmin Lari restoration team.

We can clearly see the Sethi house in the map that can be approached from the bazaar i Qallan Peshawar with a direct access to the Sethi mosque in the Mohallah Sethian.



Fig.4. 2. Board displayed at the entrance of Sethi Street photo by Author

Sethis were fond of constructing buildings of community services and many mosques were built in Peshawar Chamkani and its surroundings.

They also added a mosque at the entrance of Sethi street Peshawar.



Fig. 4.3. View of dome copula and ceiling. Photo by Author

Just opposite to the mosque is the famous Krim Bakhsh Haveli (*Zanan Khana*). The original haveli facade is no more there now; because of the division of Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli the main entrance is totally in a changed shape than original

This haveli does not have an impressive facade<sup>54</sup> like other havelis in *Sethi Mohallah* now because it has been removed by the restoration team. The original facade was demolished and a part of the building was given to the connected school. Now the haveli can be entered by a wooden door which is neither so elaborately decorated nor very simple but for sure it is less in grandeur and grace than any other Sethi haveli in the Sethi Enclave. During the restoration process haveli was added with a porch like structure at the entrance with a metal railing.

---

<sup>54</sup> The original façade replaced by a simple door inside and a beautifully carved door outside.



Fig. 4. 4. Entrance of Karim Bakhsh Haveli photo by Author

We can see the bricked floor and entrance which is intricately carved with a variety of designs. This door is just the beginning of the remarkable wood work in different rooms and balah khanas of the haveli.

The wood work in the Haveli is so eye catching that it will be discussed in a separate chapter with the wood artists and the carvers and the details of designs used in the haveli.

This haveli however is an amalgamation of the prevailing Mughal style with some features of colonial era. As a general rule we have noticed many havelis of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in the area of Subcontinent with beautifully decorated wooden doors.

## 4. 2. Introduction of the building:

In the heart of Peshawar, *Mohallah Sethian* (Sethi Enclave) we can see a spectacular series of 18th and 19th century architecture. Which is a combination of Bukhara, Kashmir, Golkonda and Iranian cultures.

These impressive mansions or *havelis* located in Bazaar-i-Qallan are very finely connected with each other from their roofs and wooden bridges, depicting a variegated world inside the bricked houses protected from weather by the material used in the construction. The *havelis* converse about the artistic magnitude and love for embellishments of their rich occupants.

In 18th and 19th century India and Pakistan from Lahore to Agra buildings, the bricks that were used were generally the small Kashmiri bricks known as *Waziri*<sup>55</sup>, were used in the Mughal era were used with ease and comfort.

*Sethis* were the most famous businessmen of Peshawar. These merchants earned huge profits in trade with India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Russia. That became the main reason for the use of multiple styles of construction in *Sethi havelis*. The palatial residence of the *Sethis*, built in 1882/1884 by Haji Karim Bakhsh, is a proof of this fact. They have used limestone, colorful glasswork, and embossed settings of flowers on wooden doors, windows, frames, arches and columns by mostly local artisans, which takes the visitor to the past when *Sethis* were enjoying their wealth at its height.

Ahmad Hassan Dani, in his book *Peshawar - Historic City of the Frontier*, describes the palatial residence of the *Sethis*. He says: "It is a highly-embellished building in the typical style of the domestic architecture of a rich man, presenting highly-carved wooden doors, balconies, mirrored and painted reception rooms with open upper stories to catch the fresh breeze and underground rooms in two stages for protection from the summer heat. A highly-carved wooden doorway leads into a court where business was transacted. A bent passage gives access to the interior. The main house forms round an open court, 40x40 feet, paved

---

<sup>55</sup> These are the kind of small red bricks used in most Mughal buildings of India and Pakistan



with bricks. The surrounding rooms show highly-carved wooden arches resting on pillars with panels showing variegated motifs.



Fig. 4. 5. The panoramic view of the Interior Atrium of Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli photo by Author

Building consisting of a *tekhana* (basement), *bala khana* (Upper balconies or terraces) and a *dalan* (courtyard) opening through a triple-arched entrance has a colorfully-painted ceiling. An interesting feature of these buildings is the colorful ceilings designed and painted with different colours in every room. The variety in design and paint of the ceiling and colour combination is highly impressive and unique. The cut-glass fixed on the *Cheeni Khanas* reflect the colorful panels embellished with antiques and vases. Hundred-year-old chandeliers in blue and yellow, imported from Belgium, enhance the beauty of the room. *Mohallah Sethian* would have attracted more tourists if it was open to public, but it is still inhabited by the *Sethis* and the beauty and grandeur is inaccessible to the public. This old and historic *Mohallah* should be preserved." So the main reason still for less access in the buildings is that *Sethi* families are residing in the havelis and do not allow people to enter the havelis for obvious reasons, privacy is one of them.

The main case study is about Karim Bakhsh Sethi and his palatial house, *Koocha Sethian* (Sethian Street) is very wide as compared to other streets of the old city. The houses were built on the style of *havelis* with large entrance doors.

Sethi Karim Bakhsh house was built in 1882, and at some places the date is 1884, (it is at some places from 1835- 1884 that makes 49 years till the work was completed). Dr. Samra Mohsin writes in her thesis, The Sethi havelis constructed over a period of a hundred years (1800-1910). Whereas Mrs. Yasmeen Lari (CEO Heritage foundation) reported to have been built in 1834. Wood work was a later addition when Sethis established wood business in around 1888.



Fig. 4.6. View of stain glass window from north bala khana. Photo by author

.The *Sethis* had flourishing business ties with Shanghai, Kabul, Bombay, Amritsar, Karachi and Central Asian states.

They built spacious havelis for their families and participated in a lot of public welfare activities. Between *Gore Khatri* and *Ghanta Ghar*, there used to be a huge well of cold water known as Sethi Karim Bakhsh Well. It had many spools for pulling up water. In the scorching heat of Peshawar, passersby used to drink the sweet and cold water from the well.

With the passage of time, their families spread and some of them moved to other cities and most of them shifted to new housing societies. Maintenance of these huge *havelis* had become very expensive for them. Though some of the old families are still living in the *havelis*, they use just a portion of it and keep the rest closed". (Peshawar, Sethi mohallah # posted by Deepak Sethi: Sunday, November 19, 2006)

The Haveli of Karim Bakhsh Sethi is a great contribution of the Sethi family. Before moving on to the building's architectural styles, material and decorative elements, one must know about the status of *Sethis*. The *Sethis* were extremely wealthy until the start of the twentieth century, when the Bolshevik revolution led to their bankruptcy. It is said that they had millions of Russian currency in their underground *tekhhanas*,<sup>56</sup> when the new Soviet Union adopted a new currency. They lost all their wealth to the catastrophe. Today, the Sethis still live in Peshawar but no more considered the wealthiest. Some of them touched the high levels of education and some are just maintaining their life and up keep of the havelis to the minimum required. The house with the Directorate of Archaeology was built by Sethi Karim Bakhsh. It is spread across an area of 33 Marlas. The house consists of four portions: the *Tekhkhana* (basement), *Dalan* (courtyard) and *Bala khana* (second step of ground floor), first floor, and roof top. Its construction began in 1835, and was finally completed after 49 years, in 1884.

<http://www.youlinmagazine.com/story/sethi-mohallah-peshawar/NDUZ#sthash.olcdZZcu.dpbs> (access date 25<sup>th</sup> December 2018)

---

<sup>56</sup> It was a common tradition to build basements for keeping valuables in the havelis of Subcontinent in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The construction of the haveli is on different levels, it appears to be a four story building with splendid decorative style of construction and impressive wood work. It gives a nostalgic feeling to be there.



Fig.4. 7. Board displayed by the department of Archaeology. Photo by author

Standing in front of the haveli reminds about the good old days when the grandparents and grand, grand parents must have lived here. But unfortunately the present generation of the Sethis is totally ignorant about their history.

The haveli through basements or connecting doors depict the aesthetic sense and love for embellishments of their once richest occupants. Apparently this building seems as if it has three stories, since the whole building is constructed in steps, some consider it as four storied building.

Many small articles have contributed in locating the original history and shape of *Sethi haveli* of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi. I would like to refer here one of the articles of Syeda Masooma. Posted by: Syeda Masooma on July 18, 2013 in Faces of Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Leave a comment: (<http://www.dostpakistan.pk/sethi-mohalla/>).

“Peshawar is one of the historical city of Pakistan and has many historical and worth visiting places. An old portion of this city is known as walled city. This old portion of the city has an area in it named as



“Sethi Mohallah”. This *mohallah* once consisted of over two dozen houses but today around one dozen of original houses including Sethi house can be found here. Sethi houses are the unique architectural masterpieces of this walled city of Peshawar that are the blend of art and architecture of Central Asia and Gandhara and some British influences can also be seen. Haji Ahmed Gull built the first one of them in 1882. *Sethi mohallah* was the enclave of Sethis and was named after them, *Sethi* that means wealthy. All the *Sethis* living here were rich traders and businessmen. They established their businesses at China, Afghanistan, India, Iran and Central Asia and their trade centers were at Tashkent, Samarqand, Bukhara, Mazar Shareef and other cities of Central Asia. The owners of these houses were famous for their wealth and love for architecture”.

Whatever may have been written or said about these palatial living places however seemed to me insufficient when I personally visited this charismatic place, I concluded that this place has a special aroma of its own unmatched to any of the buildings of its time. The art work along with the architecture style specially inspired me.



Fig. 4. 8. Present entrance e of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. Photo by author. Photo by author

Presently the haveli is with the Department of Archaeology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is slightly on high plinth. The building has a British style wrought iron railing at the entrance giving a boundary to the haveli or mansion. However this addition is having no connection with the existing building just a boundary to keep the children of the school away. The entrance has a rough and rugged look with bricks showing from some places. But when we actually want to enter the building is a strong wooden door.

From the entrance one cannot guess, that after a few stairs we will be in front of a seductive piece of construction by Sethis having overwhelming love for aesthetics as a part of their residences. They have employed all resources for the beautification of their buildings that could make these residences appealing to the eye as well as comfort of living. So in other words we can say that this haveli is a beautiful combination of luxurious living and comfort.

#### **4. 3. Material and construction techniques used in the haveli Karim Bakhsh**

The Kashmiri bricks as commonly known as Waziri<sup>57</sup> were used in the Mughal era from Lahore to Agra. They have used limestone, colorful glasswork, embossed settings of flowers on wooden doors, windows, frames, arches and columns and arusi engraved that reminds us of Bukhara, Afghanistan and Muslim art architecture and artisans of the old times when Peshawar was ruled by Afghan princes. Brick by brick, buildings in part of Peshawar have been demolished. Some of those monumental structures, that were once and are now a pride of this city, still stand with its seductive beauty and grandeur. We can still see the marks of time on these vanishing buildings. Only those who know the worth of every bit of this house have set their eyes on the decorated doors in particular. The owners have been offered huge amounts of money for these doors, so that they can be smuggled out of the country.

The obvious fact about the Sethi family is that almost all the members were well travelled, which is clearly reflected in the infusion of cultures.

---

<sup>57</sup> Badshahi bricks or Kakaiya bricks, are flat thin red colored burnt clay bricks that became increasingly popular element of mughal architecture during Shah Jahan era and remained so till early 20th century

In the light of this infusion they improved their houses in Peshawar in terms of decoration; this resulted in extensive use of wood in the Sethi houses.



Fig. 4. 9. View Showing Waziri bricks photo by Author



Fig. 4. 10. A view of *Teh khana* and use of bricks photo by Author

Wood has been the most important material in the construction of Sethi houses in particular and in havelis of Peshawar in general.<sup>58</sup> Some of the beams of wood used as a support for the structure of the houses are enormously tall and heavy. These large sizes wooden beams are so intricately carved. It must have been a difficult task to transport these wooden logs to the place of use.

It is mentioned in the Statistical, Table 27 of Gazetteer of Peshawar district under the heading Forest supplied by Forest Department, There are forests under the Forest Department. Whereas on the page 3 on the Gazetteer of 131 it is written that “Afridis are a migrating tribe”, “in winter they came down to the low hills and plains known as the ‘*Khajuri*’ and ‘*Akakhel*’ plains along the Peshawar district border from Jamrud to Kohat pass. Here they cultivated what little able land is available, but live for the most part on their flocks and herd or by the sale of wood, charcoal and grass, etc., in the Peshawar market”. It seems that Afridis brought the wood on carts driven by their camels for sale in the Peshawar market.

Lockwood, Principal of the Lahore School of Art says “Peshawar District is the seat of an extensive timber trade known for both Export and import. The principal merchants were *Kaka Khel Mian*. The wood is mostly deodar and is floated down from the hills on the west and north by the Kabul and Swat rivers. This fact places the trade at the mercy of the British government and gives the later a strong hold politically on some of the tribes and potentates beyond its borders. One of the largest wood yard is that maintained by the Amir of Kabul at *Khazana*” (Gazetteer of Peshawar district 1897-1898: 220-229). Elephants were known in the region even in the remote past when Chandra Gupta Maurya after a peace treaty took the region up to Peshawar and Kabul and instead furnished ‘Seleucus’ the Greek General with five hundred elephants. There are a few houses in Peshawar city having huge elephant gateways and gates as their entrance. One of the rare examples of such a house which can still be seen is ‘*Mirza Manzil*’ the residence of khan *bahadur* Ghulam Samdani at *Jahangir pura*. It was constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the orders of the king of Afghanistan for his daughter (Dani 1969: 117).

---

<sup>58</sup> One of the reasons may be that constructors from Kashmir also participated in the buildings of Peshawar

A story teller of Qissa Khwani bazar told that Peshawar city of 1850 had officers travelling on elephants and horses'. Dani says while describing the old city of Peshawar that there used to be bullock line, elephant line (*Phil<sup>59</sup> Khana*) and camel line where stands Lady Reading Hospital and the Frontier College for Women (Dani 1969: 145). So this discussion established this fact that elephants were used as means of transportation of wood when Sethi havelis were being built.

#### 4. 4. Types of wood:

After collecting samples from the Sethi haveli, it was taken to the trained wood technologists, who also visited the haveli to find out about the species of wood being used in the house. Following types of wood was used in the haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh.

1. Deodar *Cedrusdeodarra*
2. Kail *Pinus wallichiana*
3. Chir *Pinusroxburghii*
4. Peral or Spruce *Piceasmithiana*
5. Shishum *Dalbergiasisso*

Many out of these Sethi havelis were renovated rebuilt and some portions added to the existed havelis or aesthetic additions contributed by some rich Sethis in due course of time. Decorative Wood work was also one of the later additions in Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. Wood was used extensively when Sethis started wood business in Peshawar. The result was that this mansion reached its zenith during 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century but later they declined to the poor financial condition and constant business losses. Resultantly some *Sethis* sold, divided or tried to renovate the houses according to the modern life style. So some Sethis started to move towards modern localities of Peshawar so these havelis are neglected. As the havelis of the rich or the *umarah* occupied central places in the cities, whether it is Peshawar, Rawalpindi or Lahore the artisans, craftsmen and the workers also started to settle down in the nearby vicinity to provide comfortable

---

<sup>59</sup> Phil in Persian means elephant, who were used for transportation of wood, so we could see the parking of elephants

approach for these owners of dwellings. These havelis from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century had multiple features of Mughal architecture like use of arches and columns. And some modern features that were from British period for example use of wrought iron railings etc.

But as said earlier these havelis are a perfect combination of luxury and comfort that fully suits the climatic conditions of the area of Subcontinent. This haveli is perfectly built to suit both seasons winter and summer. The haveli is built in such a way that they remain cool in summer and warm in winter.

#### **4. 5. Architecture of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli**

##### **Researchers work plan:**

The purpose of this research is to document the haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh with special emphasis on Art and architecture. Although a restoration project under took of this haveli in the years 2010 to 2012 but still a lot needs to be done. We can say that it was just the beginning. When Haveli of Karim Bakhsh Sethi was taken over by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa department of archaeology, it was only then the other members of the Sethi family residing in the mohallah Sethian realized the importance and worth of their palace like house. The result of this fact is that none of them is neither interested in selling their house on low price offered by the department nor they are able to maintain the deteriorating condition of the haveli with their limited financial resources. This further result in continuous dilapidation of the havelis.

Following are the plans of the haveli refreshed and added a bit by the researcher for better understanding of the building. These planes are explained in detail on the coming pages.

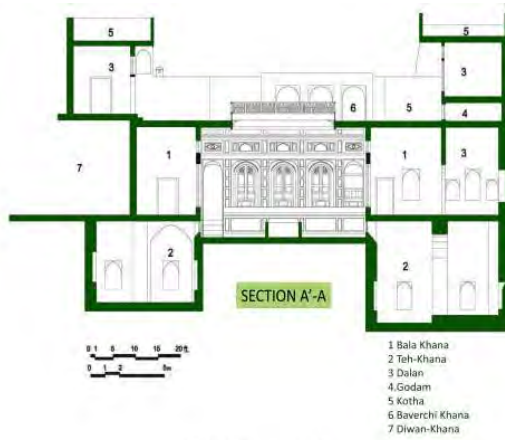


Fig. 4.11 Cross section Plan of haveli courtesy S. Khan

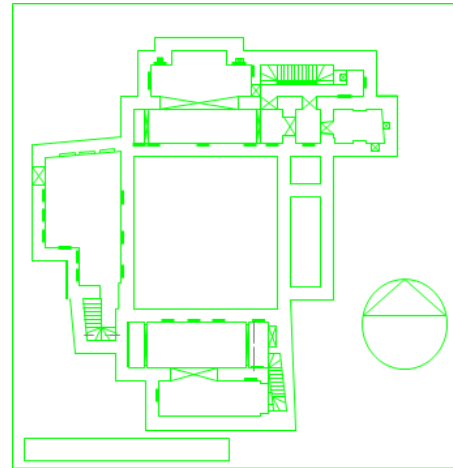


Fig. 4.37 basement plan by Saleem Afzal



Fig. 4.13. Detailed Plan of Ground floor. By Khan and Saleem



Fig. 4.43. Plan of the first floor of the Haveli by Khan and Saleem

Following is the plan by Khan showing the cross section of the Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. To understand the present structure it will be good to see the details of the plan by Khan. This plan is quite understandable, if we follow the numbers given to each section of the Haveli

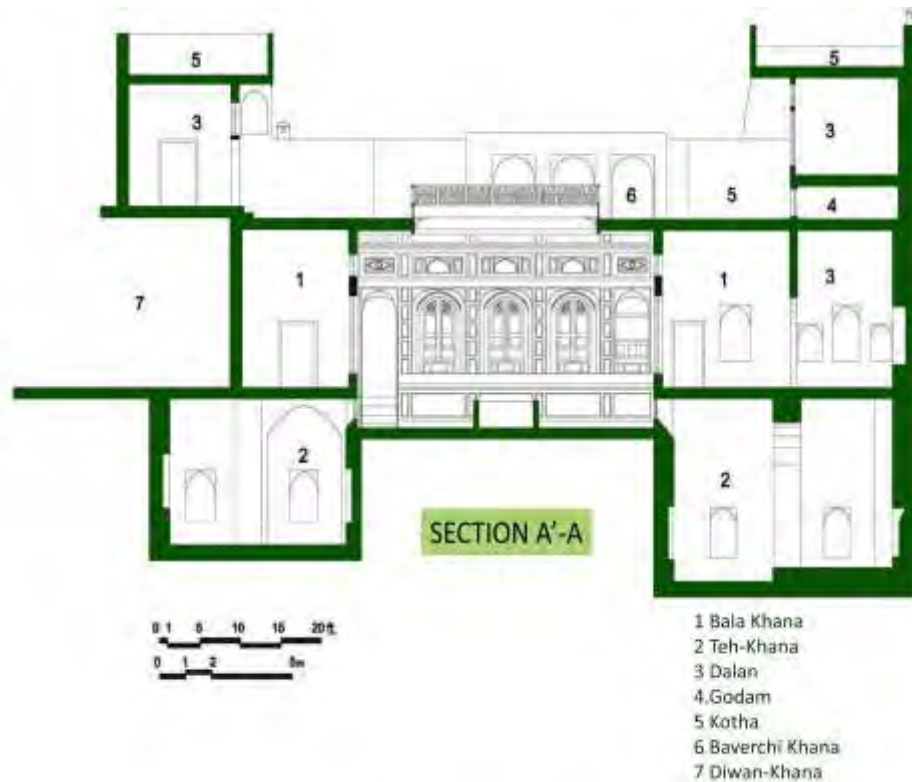


Fig.4 .11 Cross section Plan of haveli courtesy S. khan

This plan was prepared after the renovation, so we can have a better understanding of the haveli, even without actually visiting the haveli Karim Bakhsh Sethi. The structure indicates the exact placement of the rooms that is presently owned by the Department of Archaeology.

The area on north eastern corner has also been demolished now only a door with intricate wood work opens in that area going to the right side of the haveli well. It has two large pillars made of Waziri bricks and a large open to sky area, which is now used to keep the restoration material of the haveli. If this portion was still a part of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli it would have been like another small residence with all the details of other havelis of Sethis.

My research started with the physical visits of the haveli from Jan 2013. I started by appreciating the aesthetic beauty of the haveli but soon realized that very little is known about the history of the haveli and the history of *Sethi* family. So I started from digging out information first about the family then moved to



physical measurement of the haveli with the help of Mr Saleem Afzal Khan (husband), who has special interest in making the plans of old buildings and taking measurements. Each floor was measured and the plans of Dr. Samra Mohsin were found according to the exact measurements. More additions were made to make the plans more understandable.

To record the decorative elements drawings, sketches, paintings and photographs were taken to preserve this building with the eye of an artist. As far as decorative elements are concerned the most impressive is the wood work in the main courtyard and the whole haveli at large. The motives used in wood carving are generally acanthus leaves, floral and geometrical designs, wooden pollinate, cup arches, gulnawa design, scrolls and real designs with a beautiful combination of punjali. The pillars, the windows, stained glass, *khatam band* ceilings and painted walls with *Cheeni khana* create charismatic beauty and food for the soul.

#### **4. 6. False ceilings:**

False ceilings have wooden designs with glass mosaic in between. Every ceiling has a different design and pattern. They have *Khatam band*<sup>60</sup> and painted ceilings which will be discussed in detail later in a separate chapter along with the *Cheeni khanas*: These *Cheeni khanas* are master pieces of aesthetic love of the owners.

The original complex of Sethi haveli had a different façade and entrance door. When first visited the haveli in 2015 the majestic gate was missing it was just entered by a wooden door already discussed and before that there is a porch added to the entrance of the building. It has a wrought iron railing just to give a parking for the house. Now only the residential place exists in its original condition and is deteriorating with the

---

<sup>60</sup> Khātām is an ancient Persian technique of inlaying. It is a version of marquetry where art forms are made by decorating the surface of wooden articles with delicate pieces of wood, bone and metal precisely-cut intricate geometric patterns

passage of time. The main motivation of research is to study and document the art and architecture of the building with the word view of an artist.

The board displayed at the entrance door tells a little history of the haveli for the visitors. Some visit for research purpose and others for tourism or willing to witness the grandeur of the *Sethi* family.

The building is an example of a typically oriental style residence with a lot of decorative work and windows that not only reflect the financial wellbeing of the owner but his aesthetic taste and love for art. However his travel to the different areas of the world also helped him to find ideas for constructing such a decorative and splendid building. One can simply call it a living place where luxury is combined with comfort.

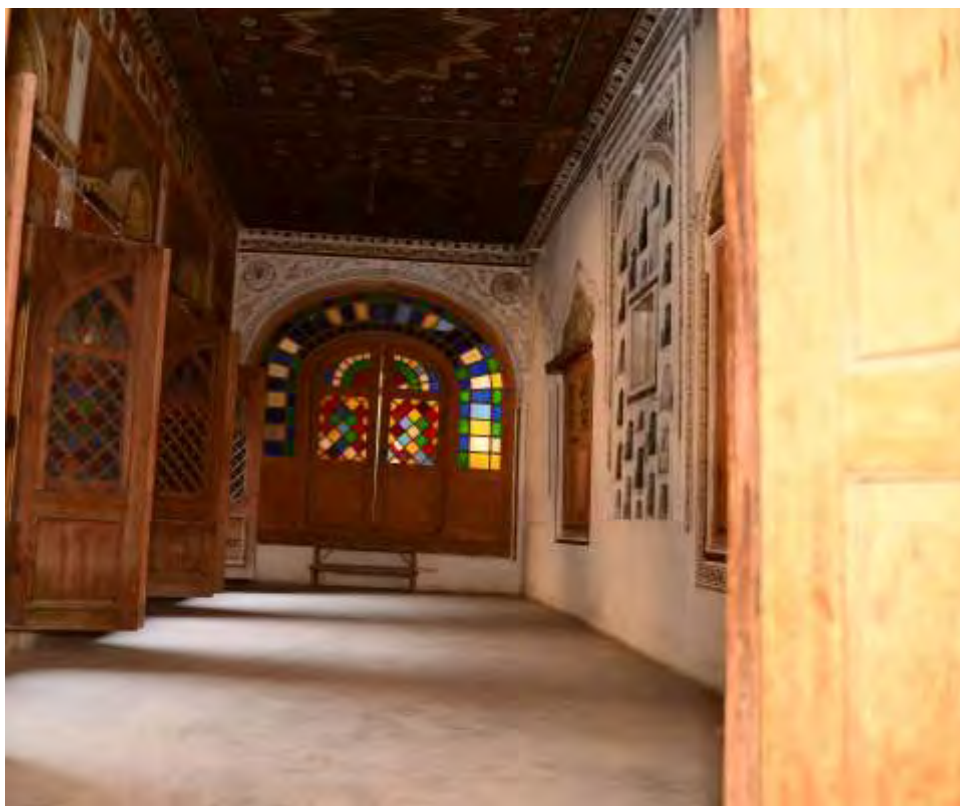


Fig. 4. 12 View of South bala khana. Photo by Author. Dec 2017

Figure 4.12 reflect the love for decorated houses of the Sethis. The bala khana is a combination of Mughal and Central Asian influences. The arched doors and windows are from Mughals and the big sliding entrance door with colored glass is typically Central Asian influence. Use of sliding door was a tradition of Central

Asia. The Cheeni khana and use of Islamic motives in fresco paintings of the room will be discussed in detail in another chapter.

Directorate of Archaeology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Decided in 2010 that the proposed workshop/seminar should be held sometime during the middle of April. Reading buildings as artifacts, through their details provides cultural insights, into the processes of design, construction, procurement, and inhabitation (Adam Sharr, 2012: 2-8). Therefore, it becomes important to read historic buildings themselves to understand what roles they played within their prevalent cultural and social context. This allows an understanding of how the occupants interacted within the building and their exchanges with the outside world in order to maintain traditions, customs and status. The typology most likely to help develop an understanding of its occupants is the domestic one, which is built, extended, remodeled and divided as per the changing/evolving needs of its patrons. The growth and changes of the domestic residence represents the patron's world view, desires, needs, values, aspirations and position within their society. The haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh is a three Story building constructed in steps with *teh khana*, *Bala khana* and *dalans*. The whole building has painted ceilings spatiality of this palace of *Sethi*. (Lari, 2012 Sethi House Progress).

Dr. Samra Mohsin Khan while analyzing the Sethi Havelis as a whole divided it to four stages of development.

1. Durrani Era (1747 1826)
2. Barakzai Sardars Era (1826- 1834) Sikh Era (1842- 1849)
3. British Era late 19<sup>th</sup> (1849- 1900)
4. British Era 20<sup>th</sup> century(1900- 1910)

According to these development Eras the Karim Bakhsh Haveli falls in the 3<sup>rd</sup> era of development. Karim Bakhsh Sethi actually built this haveli on the same pattern as the *umarah Havelis* of Delhi that were kind of walled estates with several buildings, gardens, stables and stores (Parasad 1988: 3). The *haveli* built by

Karim Bakhsh was originally the largest complex of the enclave, which had three portions, a *Zanan khana*, a *dafter khana* and a *mehman khana*<sup>61</sup>. So it can be said that this haveli essentially fulfilled all the domestic, social and business and commerce requirements including the mosque at the western end of the *mohallah*. Haji Karim Bakhsh by constructing *mehman khana* and *Daftar khana* gave a complete complex that served as residence of elite demonstrating the wealth of the family and their artistic taste. The Haveli of Karim Bakhsh Sethi Was the first building of the complex to be constructed (Sethi 2015:51). As mentioned earlier the main entrance door of the Karim Bakhsh *Sethi Zanan khana* is not the one originally made but it is newly installed, which can be seen in one of the photographs earlier. But the *daftar khana* entrance is quite original.

#### 5. 7. Ground floor plan of the existing *haveli* building:

The main *Zanan khana* under discussion is entered through a door into a *deorhi*<sup>62</sup> (corridor), which has a small office (room 1) at the right or eastern side of the entrance. While entering from the door one cannot see any other rooms or the courtyard, this was to maintain *parda* or veil for the ladies of the house. The courtyard is the heart of the *Zanan khana*. The *deorhi* acts as entrance rooms to the *haveli*. These spaces can be labeled as ‘architecture enclosing behaviors’ (Rapoport 1990: 9-20). In these *havelis* the female visitors had access to the courtyard directly and will call out the name of the person, whereas a male visitor will wait at the first *deorhi* and call out the name of the male so that female of the house can observe *parda*. This was a cultural, religious and social practice in havelis of Subcontinent. The architectural style of the rooms indicates that this is the oldest part of the haveli complex. The arches used in the *zanan khana* courtyard are influenced by the Mughal flat arches of the Jahangiri<sup>63</sup> era as the bricks used in the building are *Shahjahani* bricks from the Mughal era. The *daftar* and *mehman-khana* use gothic arches in rooms.

---

<sup>61</sup> Guest house or guest room

<sup>62</sup> They are constructed in Islamic residences as well as Hindu and Sikh houses to maintain privacy, so that the person entering should not enter the house directly but through *deorhi* so the dents get ready to welcome them.

<sup>63</sup> The great Mughal king

The haveli has a typical plan with a courtyard in the middle and rooms around it. The courtyard with the fountain in the middle is common in all Sethi havelis inspired by Mughal buildings. However the mitigation purpose of the fountain can never be ignored due to the severe summer heat. As discussed earlier the haveli is constructed in steps. The second step is the *bala-khana* constructed around the courtyard at an elevation of 5 feet. There are two staircases on south western and north eastern corners of the courtyard to reach the *bala- khanas*.

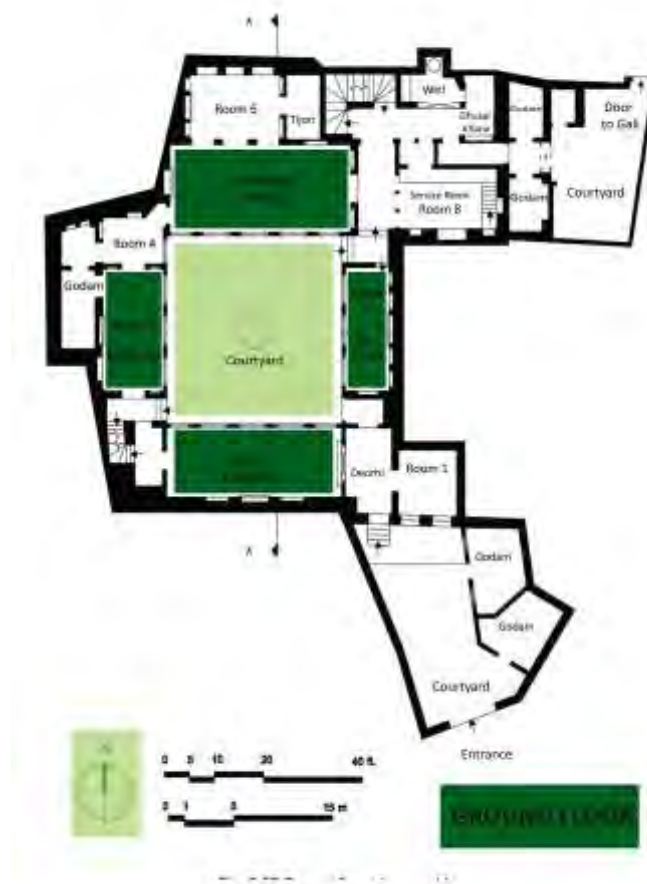


Fig. 4. 13. Detailed Plan of Ground floor. By Khan and Saleem

Figure 4.13 shows the plan of ground floor with main courtyard and four bala khana shown in dark green. The two bala khana on north and south are bigger in size with attached small rooms, which are locked as

store rooms. The main rooms of the haveli are marked or numbered by the researcher for better understanding and pointing out the decorative elements in different rooms of the haveli.

It has already been discussed that these enormous havelis are not only used for residential purpose but they have some social, religious and business significance also that is why the courtyard comprises of 30% area of the haveli. As reported this courtyard has been and is being used for social activities sine the very beginning (Hussain 1999: 45). Courtyard has always been serving as an important unit in the haveli structure in Subcontinent due to the climatic condition of the area. It also served well as haveli's thermal and environmental aspect (Sethi, Moeena, personal communication, 25 August 2017) . Entering from the main entrance on right is a small room (marked as room 1) in deorhi or entrance corridor that serves as a small inquiry room now, where every visitor of the haveli has to register himself and pay a ticket for visit. This is the small room, where one of the former owner Sethi sisters Mrs. Moeena Sethi is being interviewed. Although the oral information that Moeena Sethi provided was not very authentic, surely added up to the available oral sources from other family members of the Sethi family.



Fig. 4. 14. Moeena Sethi talking about the haveli. Photo by Author

In this plan we can still see the part of the haveli that are presently included in school building. This is the complete plan of the haveli ground floor. The atrium, the bala khanas and go downs are clearly shown and numbered. There is a well on the northern side and adjacent staircases going up to the first floor and going

down to the basement. There is a staircase on the northern side leading to the northern basement. And there is a door near to the main entrance that leads to the mardan khana but now locked because of the Sethi family residing in the house at the left of the main entrance of the Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. After entering the Deorhi there is a small staircase that leads us to the middle of the courtyard with fountain placed perpendicularly to the main entrance.



Fig. 15. 4. Renovated fountain. Photo by author Dec 2017

The central courtyard measures 40 ft x 40 feet. The fountain was not in good condition it was renovated by a team. As said by Professor Dr. Shaukat Mahmood, “restoration and renovation should always be done with the same zeal with which the actual building has been constructed”. Otherwise the results are the same as this fountain seems to be out of place.



Fig. 4. 16. A view of wooden stairs ending in atrium from south. Photo by Author

The haveli is entered by a tilted entrance from the gali,<sup>64</sup> this leads to two deorhis. The first deorhi is 4ft. above the street and the second one is 6ft above. The first deorhi has a small office on its east side and a ghusal-khana on the west side, there is also a passage through this deorhi which leads to the daftar-khana. The second deorhi turns 90° to enter the main courtyard, which is 8ft. above the street level. We can clearly see the stairs coming down from the *deorhi* to the central courtyard in figure 4.16 and room on right side of the deorhi is marked as room 1. The two *Bala Khanas* or the reception rooms are visible on both sides of the stairs basement window ventilator. The room on right or northern bala khana is marked as room 2 and the western side small one is marked as room 3 whereas the other bigger one in south is room 4. And the southern bala khana is room 5. (These numbers are given to the rooms by researcher to provide a better understanding of the plan).

---

<sup>64</sup> street



There are four *bala khanas* on all sides of the atrium, two are bigger on northern and southern side and two are small with partitions. As a general tradition, these rooms are raised to have more ventilation and have some extra space for the storage of food (Bemier 1916: 247). The general height of the haveli rooms is 14ft<sup>65</sup>. The main façade of the northern bala khana is continuous whereas side façade is intersected by the stairs to keep the symmetry and balance in the building. Sliding doors were used as early as the first century CE in Roman houses as evidenced by archaeological finds in Pompeii, Italy.

<https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=history+of+sliding+doors&rlz=>



Fig. 4.17. Main Bala khana on the South with sliding door. Photo by Author

Figure 4.17 shows the sliding doors from Central Asian tradition. Most part of the door are filled with stained glass to bring light in the room and to enhance beauty.

All the walls are covered with the arched windows to have a clear view of the activity taking place in the courtyard and were the source of light and air to the *bala- khanas*. These arches are inspired by the plain

---

<sup>65</sup> All the measurements of rooms were freshly checked by the researcher with a helper.

arches from the pavilion of the Hiran Minar in Sheikhpura constructed by famous Mughal emperor Jahangir in the memory of his beloved deer (Khan 2016: 195). All these bala- khanas are filled with decorative elements like *Cheeni Khanas* and Stain glass windows, which will be discussed in detail in separate chapter.



Fig.4. 18. A view of south bala khana room. 2. Photo by Author

The high status havelis were however modified with the prevailing styles of construction and decoration during 19<sup>th</sup> century, because *Sethis* had to travel a lot to Russia, Britain, Afghanistan and Bukhara etc.

#### **4. 8. Inner area description of first courtyard and rooms:**

*Sethis* were open to the adaption of different elements in their havelis like use of wrought iron and use of fireplaces. They were in general modern in their way of thinking so they were ready to adopt modern ideas in their buildings also. The fireplace was a European import usually adopted as a decorative element by the more western influenced Indians (Khan & Imdad 2011: 79). The cold England, these fireplaces showed the practical approach combined with artistic approach (Warren 1896: 167). But later on in elite living this

fireplace became a compulsory feature due to their continuous interaction with the British and it can be called a blend of Indian and colonial influences of construction in Subcontinent. In the rooms of bala khana a balance has been maintained in height, length and width. All the rooms are embellished with *Cheeni khanas*, *naqqashi*, *aina kari* and ceilings are a product of fine *khatam- bandi*, a Persian technique of inlaying has been used in almost all *Sethi havelis* irrespective of the time period.

All the *bala-khana* halls are filled with *Cheeni khanas* and coloured glass windows of various types.



Fig.4 .19 *Cheeni khana* and fire place. Photo by Author

Khatam bandi technique<sup>66</sup> has also been used in Afghanistan and Kashmir. It is a highly decorative technique mostly used in ceilings, where wood is used for making art forms for decorating the wooden surface in which delicate pieces of wood, bone, glass and metal are cut into intricate geometric patterns and pasted on the surfaces and we will find mostly star shaped designs.

---

<sup>66</sup> Is a Persian technique of inlay in which wood, bone and sometimes glass is used.





Fig. 4.20 Coloured glass window. Photo by Author



Fig.4 .21 Ceiling of south bala khana room 2 in Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli. Photo by Author

The residence suit of Haji Karim Bakhsh comprises of three attached rooms connecting with each other with intricately carved doors. The glass panels of these doors are oval erected (Bose 2009: 12-25). The

north *bala-khana* is attached to three *bala khans* on eastern, western and southern side. Northern Bala khana is numbered as room 2 and western bala khana is room number 3, with rooms attached on northern side.



Fig 4. 22. A view of atrium. Photo by Author

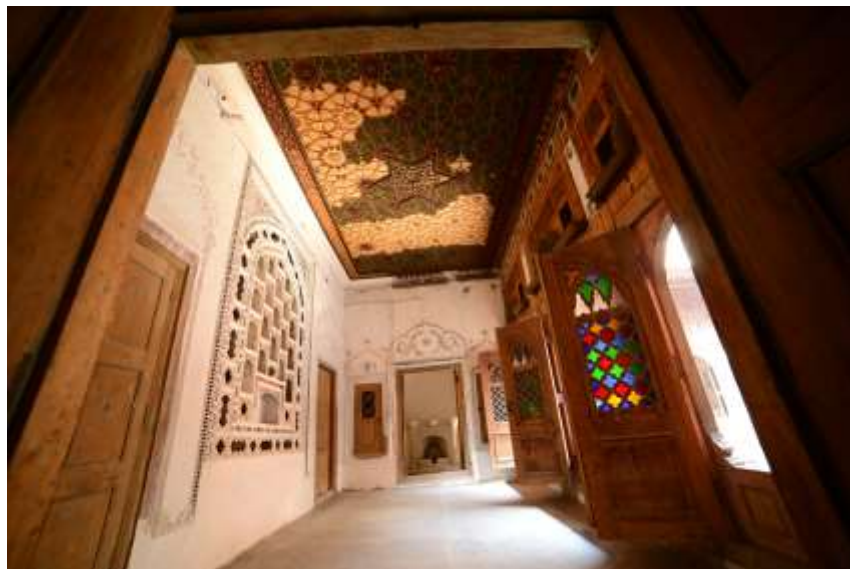


Fig. 4. 23 A view of the eastern bala khana with ceiling. Photo by Author

The eastern bala khana room 3 is smaller in size in comparison to southern bala khana but it has all the decorative element of the room 2 bala khana. The Khatam band ceiling, the Cheeni khana and the coloured

glass window and the stucco design on walls with fresco painting are a part of this room also. Connected to this is a small room marked as room 4, which is quite small in size but elaborately decorated.



Fig. 4. 24 small room with western bala khana room 4  
Photo by Author

This is room 4 with painted ceiling and mirrors on the wall in figure 4.24 which leads to room 5 bala khana at the north, which is also a big hall connected with small rooms that are being used as offices for the department of archaeology.

There are however several small rooms attached to the western side bala khana which are locked and reported by the haveli in charge that the valuable material during the restoration was kept in these small rooms. As a result we were not able to see these rooms from inside.





Fig. 4. 25. View of northern bala khana room 5. Photo by Author

Figure 4. 25 shows the details of the ceiling of northern bala khana room 5. This room also has the same ceiling pattern, Cheeni khana and coloured glass windows as the room 2 bala khana. The only thing missing in this bala khana is the glamorous sliding door with beautiful coloured glass in lay work. The northern bala khana is slightly smaller in size as compared to southern bala khana with attached rooms being used as office presently. But the balance in design is maintained by the arched windows and doors opening in the atrium with fountain.

There is a small rooms attached to the northern bala khana room 6, which is presently being used as office of archaeology department.



Fig. 4. 26. View of Cheeni khana on northern side small room attached to the bala khana. Photo by Author

Figure 4. 26 is the Cheeni khana of the small room, which is being used as office and they have displayed small pots to keep the tradition of Sethi family alive. This arched shaped Cheeni khana is decorated with floral frescos and aaina kari<sup>67</sup> around it.

The fire place reflects the British tradition and influence.

---

<sup>67</sup> In aaina kari small pieces of mirror are used to make a design



The use of *tijori*<sup>68</sup> or big locked cupboards in different rooms show that these rooms or bed rooms were used for storing money or important documents in the residence for emergency needs.



Fig.4 .27. A safe in northern room. Photo by Author

The cupboards of all the rooms' especially south *bala khana* and north *bala khana* have arched top with *munabat –kari*<sup>69</sup>. The art of embossing a design on wood by hand is called *Monabbat Kari* in Persian and *Naqqashi* in Urdu. In the corner of the north bala-khana there are doors that are locked and are being used as stores, it is assumed that this bala khana might have served as a *baithak*<sup>70</sup> or a sitting room for the male guests.

---

<sup>68</sup> Iron safe to keep valuables

<sup>69</sup> Munbat kari is Fret work

<sup>70</sup> It is a separate sitting place for guests where all acquaintances could come and chat



Fig. 4. 28 decorated ceiling of the office room with Khatam bandi. Photo by Author

Like all other ceilings of the haveli, this ceiling is also elaborately decorated with extensive use of gold and Islamic motives (they will be discussed in detail in a separate chapter).

The intricately painted boarder of the ceiling in frescos can be appreciated in figure 4. 29.



Fig. 4. 29. Frescos in eastern bala khana. Photo bu Author

The bala khana on the east is slightly smaller than northern bala khana it is numbered as room 7. This bala khana windows open into the atrium with coloured glass and arched wood work. It has Cheeni khana, frescos and decorated ceiling but with a different design.



Fig. 4. 30. View of the western bala khana room 7. Photo by Author

The service area has rooms for the servants and kitchen (room 8) also. The rooms on the north east also have extensive use of wood with simple but strong staircase ending into rooms above for living. We can say that maximum space has been utilized.



Fig. 4. 31 Stairs in the kitchen. Photo by Author

It is quite obvious with the status of the Sethi family that there must be a huge army of servant to manage the household and other matters of the house so there was a separate area with three staircases. It is located on the eastern side of the *bala khanas* along with a well in the corner, which can be vertically accessed from all the three floors with clean drinking water. This area has two bathrooms also. There is well in the haveli that supplies water to the whole haveli



Fig. 4. 32. Closer view of the well. Photo by Author

This well full filled the complete requirement of water in the whole haveli. Water can be accessed from the basement till the top story.

Facing the well on north when we turn right a room leads us to the outer open to sky broken piece of architecture, which is attached to the presently adjacent school building. It cannot be said with surety about the actual purpose of this area.





Fig. 4. 33 view of outer broken area. Photo by Author

It can be guessed that the heavy pillars with a big arch must be supporting a big portion before renovation. The use of Waziri bricks show harmony in structure as a whole.

But now this portion is being used for keeping the construction material.

When, I observed most Sikh havelis in Rawalpindi, as a general rule they had stair cases in all corners of the haveli, which used to lead to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and basement of the house. But Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli has three staircases situated in north of the haveli that leads to the upper stories and the basement or *teh khana* of the house. The location of the staircase indicates that this place may have been decided for the staircase to maintain *parda* for the visitors in the haveli. I would love the reader to follow me to the tehkhanas first and then to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the haveli.

#### 4. 9. Staircase Jharokas in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli:

The stairs going to the basement are wide enough to take the big trunks that were kept in the basement along with the other goods to keep the Russian currency and valuables. The stairs are very much similar to the stairs in Hindu Sikh havelis in Rawalpindi.



Fig.4 .34 Stairs going to the basement. Photo by researcher

All the stair cases of the haveli have Jharokas to put lamps, replaced with electric bulbs for the light at intervals.



Fig. 4. 35 renovated Jharoka

#### 4. 10.Teh- khanas:



Fig.4 .36 Teh- khana plan by Khan

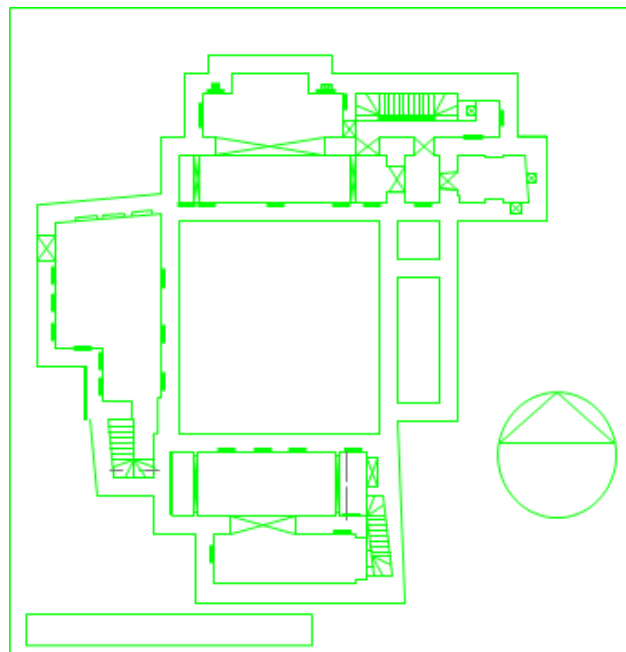


Fig. 4. 37 plan by Saleem Afzal

We can see two plans of *teh khana* in figure 4. 36 and figure 4.37. The first plan is from Dr. Samra Mohsin's research and the second one is by Saleem Afzal, who made it by taking fresh measurements with the researcher.

According to the plans going down from the stairs there are three *teh khanas* (basements) under three *bala-khans* and the fourth or eastern side has a store.

These *teh khanas* are double heighted and mostly brick construction Waziri bricks, a material most commonly used in Mughal buildings especially during the period of Shah Jahan. Extensive use of arches is another influence of Mughals. These *tekhhanas* have very big halls and due to double heighted ceilings the whole structure gives a feeling of vastness. The windows in the basement are erected in a slanting direction that is the reason that sky can be seen from the *teh khana* as well. These windows are both source of light and air. The *tekhkhana* is well lit and well ventilated. It had two purposes, one for living and the other for storage. It is reported by the members of Archaeology department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that there was a large amount of Russian Rubbles stored in them and during Russian revolution, when Russian currency lost its value and the *Sethi* family faced a great financial loss.



Fig.4 .38 view of windows opening in the central courtyard. Photo by researcher



The storage part of *tekhkhana* has large shelves to store large or heavy valuables and big trunks of currency. The door that opens into this Godam,<sup>71</sup> storage room appears like a large cupboard door, when opened reach in a perfect store for valuables like gold. In figure 4. 38 we can notice the light coming from the roshan dan which is sufficient for the big hall.

And now the western *teh- khana* door makes sense that this door must have been used for the transportation of the valuables. It has been reported by the family sources that Sethi family did trade in gold which was imported from central Asia and then sold to Bombay onwards (reported by Moeena Sethi, one of the owner sisters).<sup>72</sup>

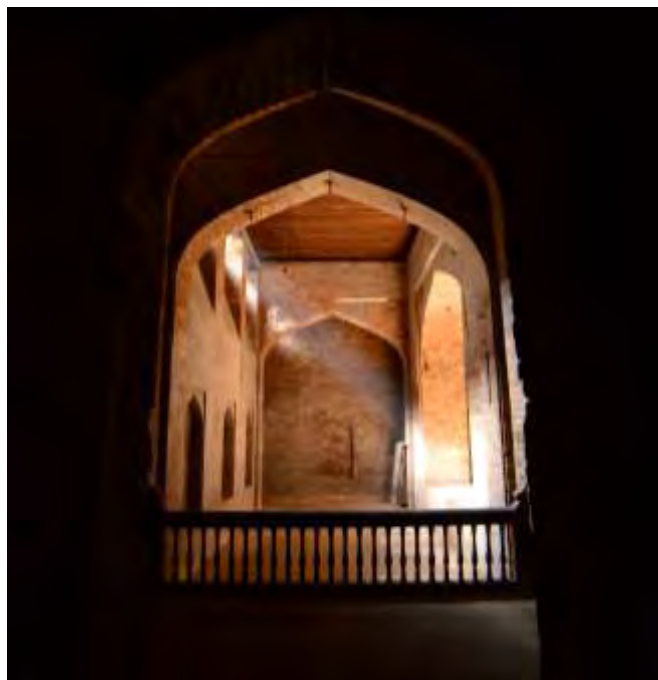


Fig.4 .39 view of *teh khana* with double arches. Photo by researcher

In figure 4. 39, we can not only see multiple arches of Teh khana but we can see the double height of the rooms of teh khana.

---

<sup>71</sup> Godam is one of those several words that gradually became a part of Urdu language during the British rule in Subcontinent meaning Godown. The khana.

<sup>72</sup> The three sisters due to their personal needs sold this haveli which they regret now



Fig.4. 40 a view of the north *teh- khana*.

Photo by Author

The ventilation system of the *tehkhana* was perfect in both summer and winter for balancing the temperature as a whole. These rooms of *teh khana* are perfectly suitable for storing the imported gold for its trade to other countries and trunks of currency that went wasted after the Russian revolution.



Fig. 4. 41 South *teh-khana* of Karim Bakhsh haveli. Photo by Saleem Afzal

There is a well that can be accessed from the north eastern side that goes till the top floor. The method that keeps the *tekhkhana* ventilated is erection of multiple ventilation shafts on its northern and eastern walls to make it comfortable both in summer and winter (Khan 2010: 38-49).

In subcontinent the traditional use of *teh-khana* to keep the valuables and sleeping there in the summer. Same was the usage of this *teh-khana* on north. The northern *teh-khana* is much larger than the *teh-khana* on the south, which is in two sections. But this one is also constructed on the same pattern with ventilation shafts on the south but smaller in size. It is close to the entrance and the *Mardan khana* of the haveli so it might have been used for sleeping purpose for the male of the family.

The third *teh-khana* is on the eastern side which is a smaller and without any ventilation shafts and has a door in the side street that indicates that it might be used to fetch commodities.



Fig.4 .42 the beautiful flower decoration, Gandhara influence tekhkhana. Photo by Author

The windows with Jali design opening in the courtyard may be used to transport large items from them to avoid the passage from the stairs. These *tekhkhanas* are in itself master pieces of construction and technical expertise of the architect. (The *teh khanas* are not numbered by the researcher but explained by the directions).

#### 4. 11. First floor description of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli*:

On this floor according to the present condition, we can say fifty percent of the total area is constructed while the remaining fifty percent is open to sky. There are three *bala-khanas* on this floor.



Fig. 4. 43. Plan of the first floor of the Haveli by Khan and Saleem

Two of these have *basta* windows<sup>73</sup> towards the north and the east. There is a lot of woodwork on the railing with the combination of wrought iron. This is the original construction of the haveli, as oral information by

<sup>73</sup> Moveable window pans, which can be used for more ventilation in the room

Moeena Sethi<sup>74</sup> suggests (interview on 20 Sep 2016). Although, all the information provided by Moeena Sethi did not match with other oral or written sources related to the history of Sethi family, however, her interviews made available some very authentic and interesting information. The haveli has a few small rooms or sections which were used for keeping pets. One such section was located under the eastern bala khana.

The *bala-khanas* on this floor are also decorated with *Cheeni khanas*, murals and painted ceilings. These decorative elements, coupled with the wrought iron railings, are of typical British influence. The owners had to travel a lot for their business ventures so they brought many influences of European style of construction with them. We can say that Sethi havelis are a pleasant mingle of Oriental and Colonial segments.



Fig. 4. 44. View of the first floor sitting place. Photo by Author

---

<sup>74</sup> Ms Sethi is the great Granddaughter of Allah Buksh Sethi (son of Karim Buksh Sethi). She narrates that her grandparents used to occupy the north bala-khana on the first floor as these rooms were constructed as part of the original haveli.

This veranda with gothic arches might have been added later in early 20<sup>th</sup> century (oral information by Moeena and Nisar December 12, 2016).



Fig. 4. 45 (1) A view of arcaded wall. Photo by Author

The rooms of the first floor are connected to those of the adjacent <sup>75</sup>*Mardan-khana*. There is a kitchen which is in highly devastated condition right now. It may be possible that the male of the family had to come for food from the adjacent *Mardan khana*.



Fig. 4. 45. (2) photograph by Alam Nawaz

---

<sup>75</sup> Is a haveli on the left of the Haji Kareem Bakhsh haveli entrance door.





Fig.4 .46 View of first floor. Photo by Author

The *bala-khanas* of first floor have the same decorated ceilings with *khatam bandi* and painting. We can see that the ceilings of the first floor have also been dealt with the same amount of expertise as the ones on the ground floor.



Fig.4 .47 View of first floor ceiling of Karim Bakhsh haveli. Photo by researcher

The pieces of wood are fixed like Jixa puzzles and are fixed with the designs without any glue. This can be noticed in figure 4. 47 in the renovated areas of the ceiling.

#### 4. 12. The eastern *bala-khana* (room 13) first floor



Fig. 4. 48 view of eastern bala khana of the first floor

We can clearly see the extensive use of wood here with a little change in form of the coloured glass design in the windows as compared to the ground floor windows. Figure 4.48 shows the window from inside the room on a bright sunny day. The purpose to use *punjali* is to bring less light and more air from outside. The use of stain glass is also for the entry of light in the rooms.

There is a wooden sitting place known as *takht*<sup>76</sup> in the middle of the *sehan*. There are two purposes of this *takht*; one is to provide a cover to the lower courtyard of the ground floor and the other is to provide a surface for the residents to sit on and have meal. Sometimes the family members would just sit and chat in the summer evenings and the winter *dopahrs*<sup>77</sup> (afternoons). *Bawarchi khana*<sup>78</sup> was on this floor making it convenient for the family to have their meals on this *takht*.

---

<sup>76</sup> Takht is actually a throne for the king, but here it is a sitting place where family could sit and chat or eat in winter noon or summer evenings.

<sup>77</sup> Dopahar is actually noon

<sup>78</sup> kitchen



The areas of open terraces on this floor and the top floor or *kotha* are the places that were used extensively by the family for spending their free time, cutting vegetables, making pickles, flying kites and playing. Generally, we can say that haveli is a combination of a living place with luxury and comfort.



Fig.4 .49 *Sehan takht* of first floor. Photo by researcher

The most important element, the well, is on the north side of the floor with nearby bathrooms and *baitul khala* (latrine) to supply water for the whole floor (Khan 2009:125-126). The cleaners could come and do their job without having any contact with the residents (Prashad 2001: 3-2).

#### **4. 13. The northern *bala-khana* (room 9) first floor:**

This room is also known as dressing room with a beautiful ceiling and Cheeni khana and basta windows. Every room of the haveli is filled with stucco, woodwork, mirror work, coloured glass and Cheeni khana. Same is the case with this room.



Fig. 4. 50 north bala khana dressing room with small connected room. Photo by researcher



Fig. 4. 51 Eastern side of 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Researcher sketching some details. Photo by Saleem Afzal

The stucco<sup>79</sup> designs can be seen in figure 4.54 with the renovation of the ceiling at some points. This bala khana has wooden cupboards for storing valuables. It is well-lit and well-decorated and reflects the aesthetic

<sup>79</sup> a fine plaster used in decoration and ornamentation (as of interior walls) b : a material usually made of port land cement, sand, and a small percentage of lime and applied in a plastic state to form a hard covering for exterior walls.

taste of the owner. There are four mirrors placed on the walls of the bala khana. It is said that this bala khana might have been used as a dressing room for the ladies of the Haveli.

#### **4. 14. Southern dalan of 1<sup>st</sup> floor:**

This is the southern dalan of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with all the details of woodwork, Cheeni khana, stucco work, colored glass work and some remains of the fresco paintings that have almost washed out.



Fig. 4. 52 southern dalan

The ceiling of the northern dalan is a masterpiece of Khatam bandi, with extensive use of mirror pieces fixed in star shaped motives. It can be said with conformity that the ceiling painters worked hard for the decoration of first floor ceilings with the same enthusiasm as they did on ground floor.

#### **4.15 Top floor or roof of the Haveli:**

After entering from the northern staircase one reaches the top floor which does not have any rooms available presently. It has been reported by the museum employees that there used to be one or two small rooms at the top floor, which might have been used as guard rooms. We can see the portion that is a part of the school and some areas that were demolished by the restoration team due to their poor condition. The top floor or

kotha is so badly renovated that it is again at the verge of destruction, and even minor earthquakes and rains could lead to demolition.

Three boundary wall of the *kotha* are in brick construction and have been plastered, whereas some boundary walls are in wood.



Fig.4 .53 door leading to the top floor. Photo by researcher





Fig.4 .54 view of *kotha*. From first floor. *Photo by Alam Nawaz*

The wooden boundary walls are the ones that can be opened and a view of the first floor sehan can clearly be seen. The wood used for this is Sheesham and is still in good condition and despite several climatic



Fig. 4.55 view of the wooden fence. Photo by author

disasters, the grains of the wood are still visible.

This is the detailed view of the wooden fence.



Fig.4 .56 Details of inner side of the fence. Photo by researcher

Generally speaking, the boundary walls that are on the inner courtyard of the first floor are in wood with doors which can be opened, at different intervals. Whereas the fence that is on the outer sides of the building



Fig. 4.57. Boundary wall on north. Photo by researcher

giving a view of the outside *mohallah* are made of brick with plaster.

Figure 4.58 shows copulas at intervals with arched depressions in the wall and the image shows that these walls are newly renovated. But it was so badly renovated and preserved that it has damaged again in different parts.

It is very strange that the plaster material seems so fragile that it has chipped off again. I think that the restoration team was breathless when they reached the top floor and they did this poor work.



Fig.4 .58 View of the wall with demolished areas. Photo by researcher

This is the view that was photographed in April 2016 and shows the demolished boundary wall on the west. The tour of the haveli concludes one thing that there is a balance and harmony in the construction of the haveli from basement to the top floor *kotha*. Comfort and luxurious living has been a motto of the owner of this building. The owner, being from the elite class, made the right choice in the selection of the architect, material and craftsmen and the result is that after more than hundred years this building is still a center for art and architecture enthusiast.

## CHAPTER 5

### WOODWORK, CEILINGS, WINDOWS AND ISLAMIC DESIGN OF THE HAVELI HAJI

KARIM BAKHSH

While entering Sethi haveli, Peshawar, the first thing that creates charisma is the exquisite woodwork in the haveli. The expertise of artists and craftsmen and the contribution of the constructors is definitely half the reason, if not more, in turning this haveli into a valuable piece of art. Under the Mughals' influences, this building represents *Naqqashi*,<sup>1</sup> *munabat-kari*,<sup>2</sup> *kashi-kari*, *aina-kari*, *pinjra-kari (punjali)*<sup>3</sup>, *parchin-kari*<sup>4</sup> (Pietra dura) etc. They took inspiration from the Persian decorative arts but reached their zenith in Mughal India. These techniques were used for decorating a wide range of *havelis*. Generally, the architecture of the region exhibited a strong Mughal inspiration in its designs, decorative elements and construction techniques. The craft traditions of the neighboring regions of Kabul, Kashmir and Punjab were similar as materials of construction were transported and the craftsmen migrated between the cities of these regions. The style of the woodwork in the regions emerged out of the amalgamation of other vibrant classical Indian art traditions in stone, and the angular and geometrized treatment typical of the Persian decorative art (Handa, Omacanda and Madhu Jain 2000). The use of timber in these regions and in the haveli particularly was extensive and woodcarving was incorporated in the elements of the facades like *Jharokas* and *chajjas*.

Considering the importance of woodwork in the haveli, a part of a chapter has been dedicated to the woodwork of the haveli in which study will be comprehensive, starting from the transportation of wood in Peshawar, to the techniques and craftsmanship and the design elements. It was discovered during the research that very big logs of wood have been used in conjunction with the intricate woodwork. There were

---

<sup>1</sup> An ornament consisting of small fillets or slats intersecting each other or bent, as often in Oriental art.

<sup>2</sup> The interior has rich embellishment in stucco tracery Manabat kari and paneling

<sup>3</sup> The art of Islamic geometry in wood through the crafts of Pinjrakari

<sup>4</sup> Designs made with inlaid stone



two sources of wood transportation according to the Gazetteer of Peshawar; one was with the migrants through camels and elephants, and another through water (even very large size logs could float through the water).

The types of wood being used in the haveli of Karim Bakhsh were documented by collecting sample pieces of wood, which were taken to the experts for identification.

The findings concluded that the types of wood included were:

Deodar	( <i>Cedrus deodar</i> )
Kail	( <i>Pinus wallichiana</i> )
Chir	( <i>Pinus roxburghii</i> )
Pertal or Spruce	( <i>Picea smithiana</i> )
Shishum	( <i>Dalbergia sisso</i> )



Fig.5 .1 A view of the woodwork of the wall of *balkhona* from the atrium. Photo by researcher

According to oral information from the members of the Sethi family, there is a region called ‘Jabimaidan’, which was filled with deodar forest, extended to Afghanistan. It is said that Sethis paid seven hundred thousand rupees to the Afghan Government and brought the forest wood for trading. The cost of wood was 17 annans (coins) per foot including the labor cost, which brought a huge amount to the contractor and an opportunity to select the best wood for their houses at a very low cost.



Fig. 5. 2. View of the fine wood used in the haveli Kareem Bakhsh. Photo by researcher

### **5. 1. Types of decorative woodwork:**

Naqqashi

Punjali (Pinjara)

Carving

Khatam bandi

### **5. 2. Naqqashi:**

The ceilings and walls of all Sethi havelis are painted with phenomenal and exquisite geometric designs.

This art is called 'Naqqashi', a Persian word meaning to draw. This is a special technique of wood painting, applied in the Sethi haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh. The two important personalities who painted the ceilings are the grandchildren of the master Naqqash, Mian Muhammad Arif and Anwar. They told that their ancestors did Naqqashi not only in *mohallah Sethian*, but also in Masjid Mahabat Khan earlier. The Qissa Khwani Bazar of Peshawar has all the achievements of the Mian family, not written but in their memories. It is reported by the Mian family (oral information) that during the reign of Mughal King Aurangzeb, by royal command, two brothers were called from Hyderabad Deccan. One took the responsibility of decorating the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore and the other came to Peshawar and took over the same work in *Masjid Mahabat Khan*. The offspring of this great artist worked and decorated the ceilings and walls of mohallah Sethian. No one knew the art of Naqqashi before the mosque was decorated by the ancestors of Arif and his brother. They claim, and rightly justified that the art of Naqqashi was unknown in Peshawar before the arrival of their ancestors. They also said that their grandfather and granduncles did the work in *mohallah Sethian*, Peshawar.

The decoration of the Sethi haveli was like a project to them in which young lads of the family were trained and employed to work, under the guidance and supervision of the senior artists known as *Ustad*<sup>5</sup>. The art of Naqqashi was taught in their family from generation to generation with precise technique, measurement, selection and creation of colours mostly from natural sources and of course the brushes were made of dove feathers to maintain intricacy and delicacy in the design as a whole. It was like an art workshop. They taught accuracy in drawing and exact measurement. The youngsters were trained in a project to work as *ustad* in the next project. The owners who commissioned these artists gave them free hand in their project by providing materials, giving them proper time, and by appreciating the artist from time to time. So the artist put in his heart and soul and created the best work of his life. The other brother, Haji Muhammad Anwar,

---

<sup>5</sup> Commonly known as master and trainer of something

wanted to continue this work but was never provided the work environment and appreciation that his ancestors were provided in their lifetime. The work was valued till the British period. Articles made with Naqqashi were sold at high prices but with modernization, people started to forget the value of this art.

Mian Muhammad Arif, the last of the Naqqashi artist, depressed due to the lack of importance, attention and appreciation for his craft, had decided not to teach this art to the next generation and wanted to let this art of Naqqashi to be buried with him and his famil



Fig.5 .3 (1) Naqqashi in haveli. Photo by researcher



Fig. 5. 3 (2) Design replicated by researcher for the understanding of its application

However, here is a list of Peshawar's renowned artists:

1. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh
2. Mian Muhammad Aslam
3. Mian Muhammd Hussain
4. Mian Muhammad Asif
5. Mian Muhammad Akram
6. Mian Muhammad Fida
7. Mian Muhammad Umar



Fig. 5. 4 Another ceiling pattern replicated by researcher

The artifact is created by a carpenter. The Naqqash only does Naqqashi on it. Like a painting, it goes through a lot of stages in which the work is executed (Imtiaz 1996: 28-29).

Step 1:

To make the wood surface smooth with sand paper.

Step 2:

A thin layer of *saraish*<sup>6</sup> or local glue is applied. A layer of *roghan*<sup>7</sup>, a local oily substance, is applied.

Step 3

On slightly dry surface gold leaf is applied or silver mixed with gold colour.

Step 4

After applying gold and silver colour another layer of *saraish* is applied then very thin fine brushes are made from dove feather to draw a fine line like hair.

Step 5

A very fine brush drawing of the design is made with black colour.

Step 6

Each and every part of the design was filled with fine brushes. Leaves, flowers and all parts of the design were carefully and intricately painted.

Mian Muhammad Ummer's pallet was different from those of Anwar and Arif, when he worked in *mohallah Sethian*. The brightness of colours used by him has not faded till now because he manufactured colours from natural resources e.g. blue was acquired from Lapis Lazuli stone, red from *Shangref* stone and green from *suchi sabzi*. When his sons worked almost forty colours were available in market. Gold was acquired from pure gold. That is why it still dazzles on the ceilings of Sethi havelis.

### **5.3. Ceilings of karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli:**

*Tali*, the local name for *Shisham* and *Khaz*, the local name for Walnut and *Baint* wood were considered good for Naqqashi. All the ceilings are decorated with geometric pattern, typically Islamic, with very less

---

<sup>6</sup> Usually homemade glue

<sup>7</sup> Oil made from natural sources



repetition of design than other ceilings. Perfect designs were faultless representations of patterns that were well thought out. The care and expertise with which the drawings were made, ensured that they were flawless in design or outline.



Fig.5 .5 Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli ceiling with dazzling gold and lapis blue still bright.  
Photo by researcher

The pieces of wood were fixed on the surface by the carpenter and then the whole design was drawn on the wood mosaic. This work of wood mosaic in which a whole *jaal* (net) was made for the ceiling first and then fixed on the ceiling, is known as Khatam in Persian and is an ancient inlaying technique. It is close to marquetry, where art forms are made by decorating the surface of wooden articles with delicate pieces of wood, or any other material precisely by cutting intricate geometric patterns. But the only difference is that the inlaid work in marquetry is brought to the same level of the surface itself, whereas in Khatam-Kari the material is slightly projected from the surface (information by Mian M Anwar and Mian M Arif).

The whole design was then perfectly drawn on the ceiling surface following the steps of Naqqashi. To paint the ceiling, a wooden stand-like platform was constructed from where the Naqqashi artist could paint the surface either by lying or standing with his head tilted without disturbing the intricate design drawn on the



Fig.5 .6 Example of khatam bandi and Naqqashi in Karim Bakhsh haveli.  
Photograph by researcher

ceiling. The strain in the neck of a Naqqash working in Sethi haveli was no less than the strain in the neck of Michael Angelo while painting the ceiling of Sistine Chapel. It seems unbelievable that the Naqqash never traced any design and used only a ruler, a compass and a pencil for measuring and drew the pattern so perfectly that no mistake was expected. The speed and perfection with which the whole project was accomplished is amazing. The colour scheme was approved prior to the start of the work with the consent of the owner of the house. This also demonstrates the artistic taste of the owner along with the artist himself.

#### **5. 4. Use of Geometric designs and patterns in Karim Bakhsh haveli Peshawar:**

Use of geometrical designs has always been associated with Islam. In Islam, use of physical representation is prohibited to a certain extent, and so the only thing that is relied upon for decoration of the buildings is geometrical or natural motives and calligraphy.



A brief history about the use of geometric designs along with some images with geometrical designs used in the haveli are presented here.



Fig. 5. 7 View of a ceiling of Chajja in atrium. Photograph by researcher



Fig. 5. 8 Another ceiling room 7 of ground floor photograph by researcher

Generally speaking geometrical concepts in art and architecture have a long history behind them. The ancient civilizations of Sumer and Egypt produced monumental expressions of art and architecture. Viewing their excavated temples, palaces and sculptures we can safely assume that they must have established some geometrical procedures to help them produce such accurate and precise structures in this remote past (El Said and Parma 241).

During the time of Socrates (469- 399 B.C) and Plato (428- 347 B.C), Greek women wore attires with geometric patterns (El Said and Parma 231). Gothic cathedrals have geometric arrangement for the glass to fit; the same has also been used in the haveli windows and doors, as discussed later. These are also found in the mandalas<sup>8</sup> of sacred architecture in India. Lines and circles have also been used for decoration by Chinese.

In Islam, Tauhid<sup>9</sup> (Oneness) is the metaphysical doctrine of divine unity. Tauhid is the source and a culmination of all diversity (El Said and Parma 231). The Muslim artists when denied human and animal representational forms were naturally attracted to use the circle, which is also a symbol of unity and Tauhid. They explored all its artistic possibilities. They sought all the geometrical systems that were based upon the regular division of the circle. In this particular field, the Islamic art from China to Spain has a close resemblance. The concept of composition of all Muslim countries is the same despite diversity of material, form or style used. In the cultural progress of the world, this Islamic heritage is an important link in the assimilation of the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Asia. The geometrical patterns on the ceilings of *Mohallah Sethian* remind one of the decorative tile work of Persia's old architecture. Similar designs are seen in the Ottoman palaces in Turkey and in the architecture left by the great Mughals. The craftsmen and artists applied geometrical principles and created an amazing variety of patterns. Based on a circle, they found a perfect method to shape areas. The radius functions as a basic linear unit. A system of proportion is generated by a division of its circumference. This basic linear unit then can be developed into a square, a triangle, and polygon. Square, pentagon, hexagon, octagons and frequently a star shaped, all

---

<sup>8</sup> A circular figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

A mandala as a symbol in a dream, representing the dreamer's search for completeness and self-unity.

<sup>9</sup> Oneness of divine in Islam, an essential pillar

contained in a circle (Qizilbash 1996: 29- 33). The pattern is further elaborated by multiplication, subdivided to decorate borders.



Fig. 5. 9. The decorated arch in the Sultan's Loge at the green Mosque, Bursa Turkey.  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=Tiles+at+Green+mosque+bursa+turki&rlz=1>



Fig. 5. 10. Persian-tiles at the Shah Sheragh Shrine at Shiraz.  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=Persian-tiles+at+the+Shah+Sheragh+Shrine+at+Shiraz>

This is the perfect use of star shape in tiles manifestation itself and to the person who is conscious of its emergence.



Fig. 5. 11 ceiling of eastern bala khana of ground floor



Fig. 5. 12 Representation of star shape in north bala khana room 2 ceiling. Photo by researcher



## 5. 5. The evolution of Star shape geometric Islamic design and its utilization in havelis:

A detailed diagram representation is included in this chapter.

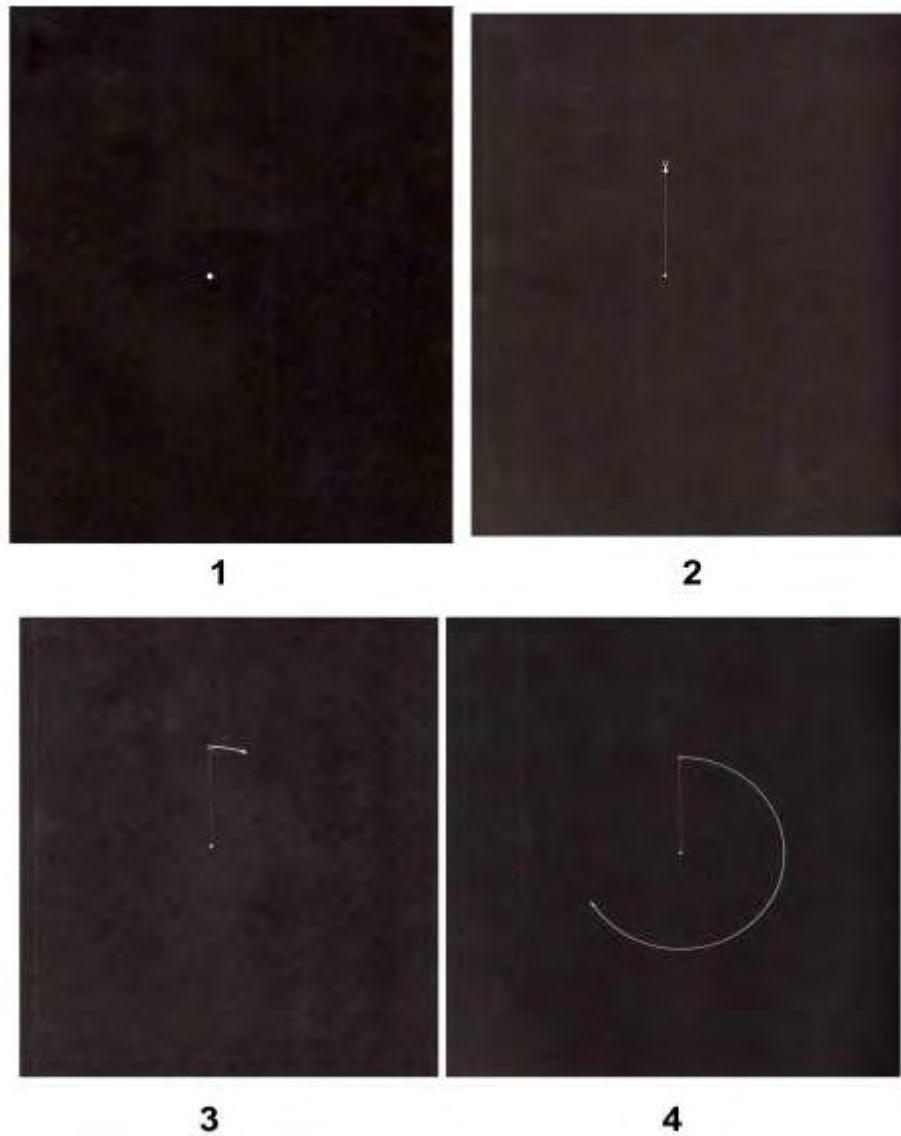


Fig. 5. 13 Chart showing beginning of design. . *Les Element de l' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs*. Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title *Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design*. New York and London, 1973.

Keith Critchlow writes in his book 'Islamic Patterns' how the star shape in Islamic geometry took place. "The manifestation of an action, object or thought (if it can be defined) necessitates a point of origin or departure, in relation to both".

1. "White spot point shown, serves as a symbol for unity and source. In geometrical terms, it represents the subtle controlling point of all forms.
2. Moving direction to the other point. The line path can be understood as representing the point's externalization itself.
3. This limited departure from the origin, split expresses itself in the relationship of the central 'original' point and the outer projected (active) point. Limited departure from the point of origin makes an arc, with the line representing our original departure as radius.
4. The arc implies the control exercised by the center point and expresses the demarcation of the active outer limits: the movement expresses an expansion".

The center is always hidden in point of origin.

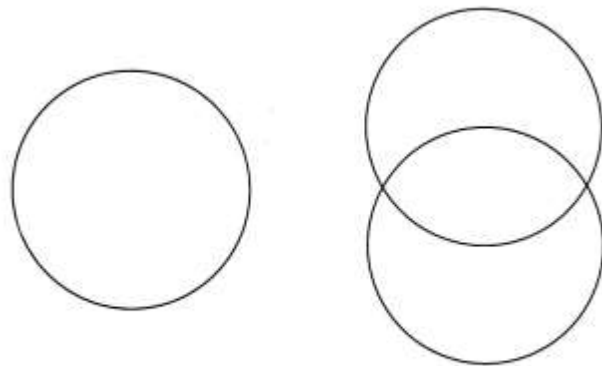


Fig.5. 14. Forming a circle. *Les Element de l' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs*. Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title *Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design*. New York and London. 1973.

As soon as the closing circle is completed, a unity is obtained: “this reflects the unity of the original point.

The circle is not only the perfect expression of justice, equality in all directions infinite domain, but also the most beautiful parent of all the polygons. Circle has always been a symbol of eternity. The circle expresses threeness in itself, i.e. center, domain, periphery”.

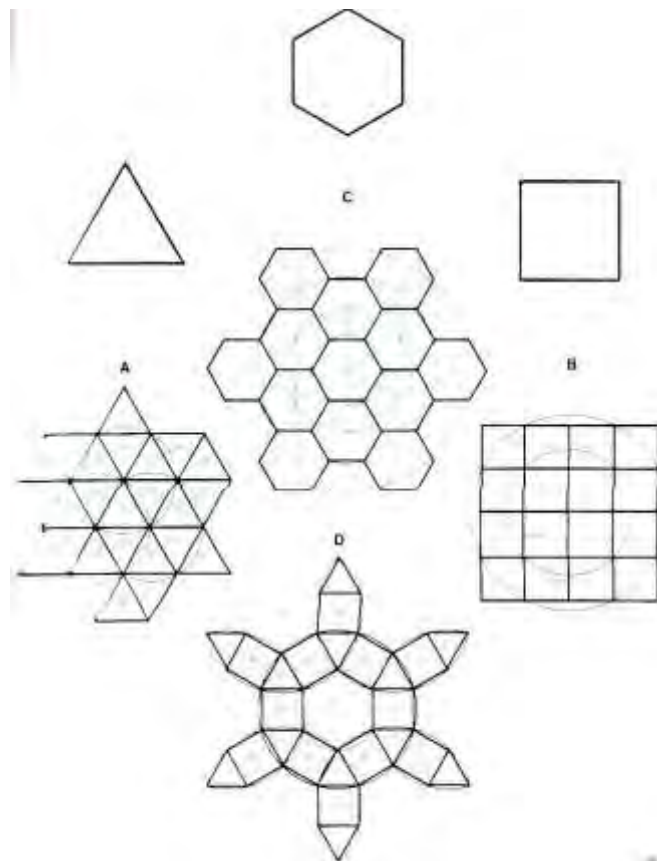


Fig. 5.15.Repeating panel with regular shapes. *Les Element de l' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs*. Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title *Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design*. New York and London. 1973.

If a fabric is woven or a tile is made, then there is a simple way of repeating patch work. Figure 5.10 shows the same. Variations can be achieved by experimentation with these shapes.

But it is on this very simple law of ‘threeness’ that the foundation of Islamic geometric patterning are rooted, practically, symbolically, philosophically and aesthetically.

The triangle repeats by sitting next to itself upside down alternately. When enough are together (A) the centers of these triangles when joined makes a hexagonal matrix. The square (B) is most commonly used, to point well beyond saturation in western urban environments and is self-repeating when the centers of this kind of matrix are joined. The hexagon (C) will nestle together with six other identical, with itself surrounding it to make a regular repeating pattern and when the centers of these are connected, a triangular grid emerges. We can say that the hexagon and triangle are self-dueling or self-complimentary. The (D) drawing illustrates the dueling property of the hexagon and the triangle (shown in the colour) as well as treating the point of contact as their primary shape which is integral in a repeating pattern. A smaller triangle occurs over each center of the coloured triangle and likewise a smaller hexagon over the center of each coloured hexagon, with a smaller square centered over the cross-over of the coloured dual grids. The whole represents the equilibrium of the three regular tessellations and is itself a key guide for many Islamic patterns (Critchlow 2001: 10- 35).

“From the point of view of the final pattern, the squares can be seen to be grouped in sets of fours, with small extensions at the outer center points of each group. They work as sets enclosed by the woven asymmetrical octagons. This pattern is from northern areas of Islam – the Turkish region. It can be seen in the buildings of the origin. It is necessary to discuss the complete design to understand the theme. The fact that the asymmetric octagon is made up from a set of five pointed stars is the first feature apparent to explain the rhythmic flow through the static square grid. By the continuation of the extensions of the five pointed star, a twelve pointed star is created at the junction of the four of the square patterns. We can also see how a very small twelve pointed star has been created at the half way junction of the square grid. This pattern is a good example of the primary and secondary decisions that have to be made by the master designer. First Mathematical certainties are selected and arrangement is decided upon, the regular five pointed star” (Critchlow 2001: 94- 95).

The pattern in figure 5.16 can be found from Turkey to India and from India via Saudi Arabia to Egypt, Morocco and Spain, as well as in mosques of Persia.



The characteristic shapes that arose from the overlapping of the regular pentagons, now takes a new value

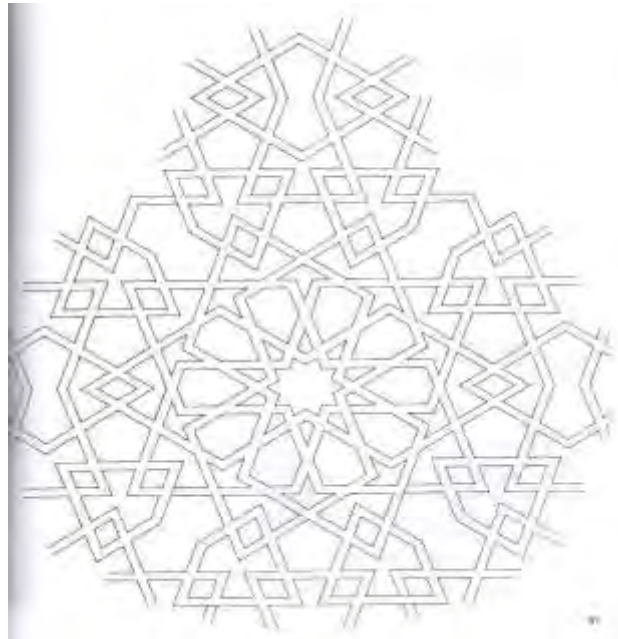


Fig.5.16. Most common Islamic Pattern found in Islamic buildings. *Les Element de l' art arabe: le trait des entrelacs*. Paris, 1879: plates reprinted under the title *Arabic Geometric Patterns and Design*.

– that of overlapping or interweaving paths. Each part of the central ten-petal motif extends to its own ‘point’ and can be read as a dual closed path across the center, creating its own path of the whole. The evolution of Islamic design is definitely a result of a long period of creative experimentation

It is still amazing how these Naqqash used this star shape at many parts of the haveli. Coming back to the ceilings of Karim Bakhsh haveli, it was orally explained by the last Naqqash of the family that Naqqash developed their own vocabulary to identify different designs. When a four sided motive was known as ‘*Chauvan*’, where as an eight sided design was called ‘*Athvan*’ and so on and so forth (Nath: 62).

#### **5. 6. The symbolic value of Star in Islamic decoration:**

Haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh is actually filled with the use of Islamic designs in woodwork and especially ceilings have a remarkable versatility in geometric designs. As mentioned above, the artists and craftsmen

really worked hard to create these extraordinary geometric shapes on the ceilings without the use of any tracing, simply by measuring and using scale. It was discussed earlier that Sethis were deeply indulged in Islamic beliefs and adopted it as their way of life. That is why many members of the Sethi family spent generously on social welfare projects. They believed in Sufi thoughts and ideologies, and used these Islamic geometric designs to express spiritual meaning. It is therefore decided to discuss here about the symbolic use of stars and geometry so that it is easier to understand their beliefs.

Evaluation of the Islamic star shape has already been discussed starting from a dot to the star. Now the symbolic meaning and its significance will be discussed. The symbol of the star is very significant in Islamic culture. The star has many different meanings in Islamic culture depending upon the shape and form of the star. Most Islamic countries use five, six and eight pointed stars. The eight-point star is widely used as a symbol in Islamic art. It is called Khatim or Khatim Sulayman, seal of the prophets, as in signet ring. The phrase “seal of the prophets” is also used in the Koran and has particular ideological meaning for Muslims (Bin Abu Bakar, 2008).

When it comes to the design and research of Islamic architecture, the discipline is still over-dependent on approaches that focus on the formal representation of historical models. However, it has been argued that limiting Islamic architecture to particular compositional characteristics degrades its real value and segregates it from the general architecture of the world (Rabbat 2004).

In Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, the star has intimate spiritual significance. It is displayed centrally on the universal symbol of Sufism, the winged heart. It is referred to as an expression of divine light – the light that enters the heart during creation and exits the heart during annihilation. It is also representative of man – and man’s divine union with God – as it evokes the silhouette of a person with his arms and legs extended (Alexander 2009).

There is one class of geometrical patterns that Islam has made its own. It include star like motives linked or oriented according to certain precise rules to produce endless repeating two dimensional patterns. The

patterns are unquestionably the most beautiful and intricate of all Islamic patterns, and they owe their beauty in no small measure to a high degree of symmetry at all levels (Lee 1987: 182)

However, Professor Dr. Mamoon Khan in her book on Wazir Khan Mosque has tried to locate the history of use of geometry very convincingly.

She started from the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, where it was used simply to measure land, to construct buildings and also utilised in the astrological computation. But Greeks refined this skill to pure geometry. The name of Euclid in this context is very famous; he wrote a treatise on this subject in around 300 B.C. in his mathematical school. But all dispersed with the passage of time and then was reinvented by Muslims in the 8<sup>th</sup> century under the Abbasid rule when some of the Greek books on geometry came in their possession. Geometry was then developed to such an extent that it became the part and parcel of the Muslim world which was provided with symbolic, cosmological and philosophical connotations. This was especially implemented on architecture and its adornments. In the plan, elevation and decoration. The strict rule following of geometry resulted in harmony, rhythm and discipline in all the spheres of Islamic art (Khan 2011: 210).

It becomes pertinent that the use of the geometric star shape in Muslim buildings, whether religious or secular, is due to two main reasons. First is that figurative representation in Islam is quite restricted and the other is the love of Muslim artists for geometry and relating it to the spiritual aspect of the star shape as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The use of geometric shapes, especially the star can also be seen throughout the Karim Bakhsh Haveli. In all the buildings of Muslims, where geometric shapes have been used for decoration, there is a utilization of space through division of geometrical rules that even the negatives areas form symmetrical patterns. Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli reflects the same pattern.

But this discussion does not mean that star shape decorations were limited to the Muslim world only.

This celestial element, the star, has been a part of décor since ancient times with a variety of connotations. In orient, from pre-Islamic epochs to the modern era, we perceive a variety of star shaped ornamentations.

One of the earliest examples is from Mesopotamia on the Stele of Narum Sin which dates back 2300- 2200 B.C. (Khan 2011: 210).

The mystery of designs can be enjoyed in every corner of the haveli with its different ways of using geometry at different places. To understand more regarding the association of star shape with religion and spiritualism, I would like to present the relationship of art with religion in view of K. K. Aziz.

The artist's medium is different from God's, so is his creative power. But within his field he is the creator, by the grace of God, of shapes and forms. There is another connection between the artist and the Creator. God is beauty, and the artist is also in his own way is creating beauty. He also considers art as a spiritual activity which is no less than philosophy or science. The process of creation is a voyage of discovery, a journey in a new land, a search for something beyond semblances. The artist is seeking the reality, the eternal truth, the immutable verity, the essence of ultimate beauty is God. This is the fundamental principle and inspiration of Islamic art (K. K. Aziz 2004: 5).

The imagination behind art is human, but the afflatus, the original impulse, is divine. Man's effort is almost without limits, and his skill is a thing of wonder, yet "no work of art inspired by man alone will ever be a work of art", and religion, "that some otherworldly inspiration", is essential to art (F. Macshane 1963: 5).

The principle of tradition in religion is the prime mover of the spirit of the artist. All believers yearn to be drawn towards the transcendent; the Divine spirit breathed into us at the moment of our creation is the cause of this desire. Every soul is the part of the Divine creator and pines to be with him again. Hence man's wish to live among forms that echo the transcendent archetypes. Islamic art is no more than a reflection in the world of matter of the spirit and even of the form of the Quranic revelation" (S. N. Nasr 1973: 5). The arguments of multiple authors move to prove one fact related to Islamic art (of which star is the most important shape), that it was produced while artist or mathematicians struggled to create the geometric shape from a mere dot. That leads to one Supreme Being – the Creator, the God.

Following is the structural representation of the eight sided star by Claude Humbert.

1. The square is the most common structural unit in polygonal geometric designs.
2. Two squares overlapping at an angle of 45 degree.
3. This construction lends itself to the creation of polygonal geometric designs in multiple four.
4. By reason of its divisibility, the circle is the basis for all polygonal geometric designs in multiples of three.

The oval and the ovum are the structural bases for plant and floral ornamental design (Humbert, Claude 1980: 10).

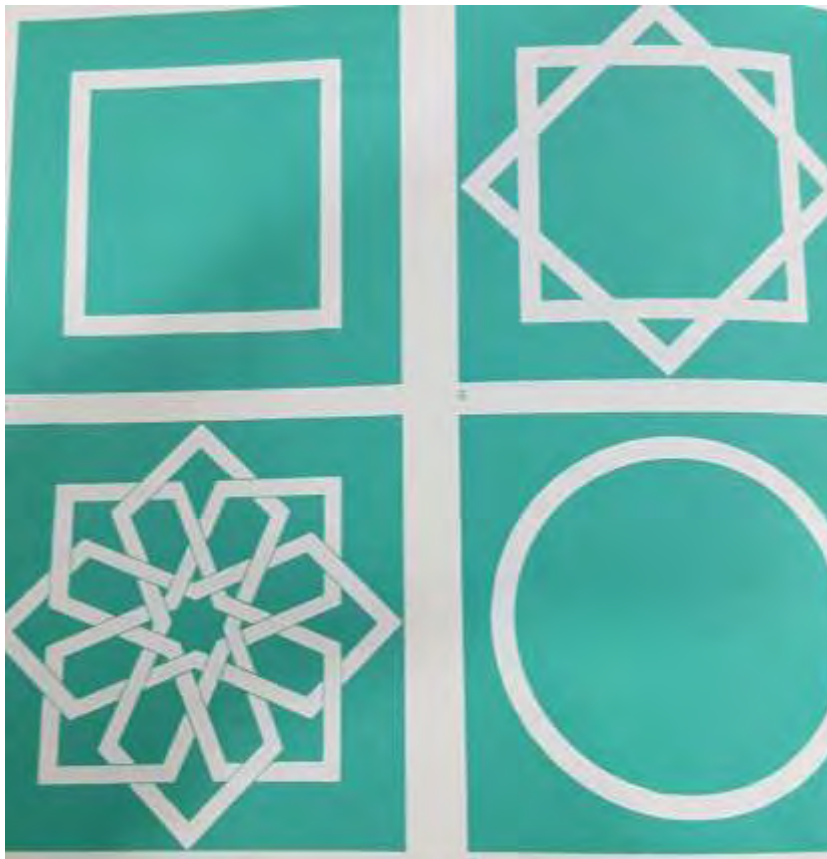


Fig. 5.17. Page 10, Islamic- ornamental Design by Claude Humbert

We can say with conformity that the beauty of a work of art always depends on the internal purity of the artist. This leads to the symbolic value of the star and associates it to the divine.

### **5.7. Colours used on haveli ceilings:**

All the colours used in the haveli were obtained from the natural mineral sources to form colours that are never fading. When we learn the technique, it has also been proved that the early man obtained colours from the same sources (Bateman 1972: 727).

According to Haji Mian Muhammad, the red used in Naqqashi was obtained from a local rock called Shangref, and it was confirmed by Geology Department, University of Peshawar, that it is 'Cinnabar' which is a mercury sulfide.

Gold and silver pigments were obtained by pounding bits of metal between sheets of parchment into thin leaves called varaq. These were grounded with salt into a fine powder with a mortar and pestle. The salt was then washed out and colour was used, mixed in other solution (Welch 171).

It can be assumed through the facts that the Naqqashi was done sometime between the years 1881 and 1930. As mentioned earlier houses were improved and these remarkable embellishments were added to the earlier simple residences. Even then these colours are almost 100 years old but are still dazzling with their original brightness. The bold colours used were carefully made with a laborious process and then applied by mixing it with other substances.

### **5.8. Punjali:**

The art of *Jali* typically used in *Sethi havelis* is known as *Punjali*, whereas in the old Gazetteer of 1897-1998 it is recorded as *Pinjra*. Mr. Allah Bakhsh from the Khyber bazar explained that his uncle personally knew the Punjali artist Abdul Hakim Jan very well and confirmed that the artisans call it as *Punjali*, and not *Pinjra*. The architects, artists and artisans who worked for Sethis they either worked for Mughals or came from Afghanistan and Iran and worked under these masters. But decorative finish in the architecture to the Mural paintings were definitely done by the artists who were masters of their work and can be called institutions within themselves. They trained their families and worked till they were praised and valued. The work was in great demand and had a good price. In 1887/1898 the prices of Punjali screens were very

good so the artists were manufacturing them frequently – after all they needed money to survive. They fully utilized the Islamic geometric designs in decorating the building as a whole.



Fig. 5.18: A view of Punjali screen room 3 of ground floor. Photo by author

They sometimes selected the same star shaped designs in the perforated Jalties (in wood, metal or concrete) and on the ceilings of the paintings. From the entrance, the doors of the haveli till the top floor have decorative motives that show inspiration from Islamic design.

As discussed, Islamic star shape designs have evolved. It can be seen in figure 5.18, that the repetitive method has been used in the panel above. If it is observed carefully it can be noticed that the star shape repetition and its expansion is clearly visible. There are several stars emerging from the center of one star, with altogether four stars and then each corner is ended up with a small star. There is a design band surrounding the central star design, based on Islamic geometric design. Influence of Gandhara art on the lower portion of the whole band is also visible in some carvings with a wheel motive in both corners. The symmetry, intricacy and balance in the carved wooden motives make it a work of art.



Fig. 5.19.A scanned panel from Islamic Art by David Talbot Rice. Title page

In figure 5.20, the resemblance of the star shape Islamic pattern is visible in its Repetitive method. The same star shape repetitive design has been used in most decorations of the haveli filled with hexagonal Jali<sup>10</sup> made of wood.

The beauty of these geometric designs can be appreciated in Sikh havelis, not necessarily in wood or painting but also in concrete Jali.

The overall aesthetic quality of the haveli reflects Karim Bakhsh Sethi's interest in decorative finish in the building as a whole. With no bias or prejudice, he has utilized the best available artists and woodwork specialists in the making of the haveli. This resulted in making the haveli a very balanced work of art. But unfortunately, there is no artist of Punjali surviving in Peshawar or known to be in focus for further work. However, with the help of the locals we can try to look for some hibernated artists.

---

<sup>10</sup> Perforated screen having holes from which air and light can pass



### 5.9. *Punjali* technique:

Woodwork, *Punjali* developed and reached its perfection under the Muslims. “It is a kind of a lattice work in which the tracery consists of small pieces of wood arranged in a geometrical patterns with their edges displayed. The slips are held in position mainly by the pressure with which they exert, one against the other, by certain main lines being dowelled together and by the frame of the panel which contains them” (Gazetteer of Peshawar District, 1897-1898:39-40). The result is a decorative woodwork, which is exquisite, refined and intricate ‘punjali’ in its finest form and is never glued together. In an elegant work they are so accurately fitted and balanced together that they do not fall to pieces even when the frame is removed. The patterns created are in a great variety. The wood types that used for this commonly include ebony, walnut, sandal and olive, which are all used to create assortment of colors.



Fig.5 .20 Detail of Punjali. Photograph by researcher

In short, the specific sized pieces of design are carved and joined like a puzzle at its proper place, fixed firmly, forming a panel. The Jali design not only gives an aesthetic satisfaction to the onlooker but also becomes a great source of ventilation and light.

### **5.10. The history of *Punjali* woodwork:**

In the Ottoman domestic interiors, perfect craftsmanship is displayed in the assembly of small pieces of wood fitted together. Mamluk windows in Cairo have *punjali* screens. The art came to Peshawar from Central Asia with the boat builders who came with armies of different invaders and settled here. Mahmood Ghaznavi also brought his own boat builders with him when he wanted to conquer India. *Punjali* initially was introduced to decorate boats (Michell 1978:167).

The *Punjali* artists of Peshawar trace their origin to the boat maker's families. Abdul Hakim's ancestors were Awans. They came with Mahmud Ghaznavi to build boats for his army. They became tutors in the fine woodwork from Kashmir. That is why it reached its most refined form in Mohallah Sethian Peshawar.

### **5. 11. Abdul Hakim, the *Punjali* artist and wood carver of Peshawar:**

Abdul Hakim Jan is the great wood carver of Peshawar, who alone created almost the entire woodwork of the two houses of *Mohallah Sethian*, the house of Haji Ahmad Gull and Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi. The old Gazetteer of Peshawar district 1897-98 on page 220 and 229 says "the most skillful woodworkers of the district are the Awans". Although Abdul Hakim was born in Peshawar but his date of birth is not ascertained. There is an article written by Mr Lock- wood Kipling, Principal Lahore School of Arts, and reproduced in the old Gazetteer 1897- 98. It says "He learnt the art from a Kashmiri teacher". There are other evidences that prove that there was a good amount of interaction between Kashmiri craftsmen and the craftsmen of Peshawar. There is a probability that after completing the project, Abdul Hakim also moved to Kashmir with his Ustad (oral information by the granddaughter). He stayed at Mohallah Batmalu Srinagar, with the wood carver's family, who had no children of their own. He learnt and became an even better artist of *Punjali* from his teacher and came back to Peshawar, where he happily did projects internationally, moving through Pakistan to Gwaliyar bazar in Bombay. Then British also regarded his art at high pedestal.

Mrs. Mubarik Jan, the granddaughter of the artist quoted that Ustad Abdul Hakim always worked alone with miraculous speed. He could work with two three tools in his hand effortlessly. He taught his art to no one, not even his only son. So his art died within him. In those days projects like *Mohallah Sethian* were done as workshops where trainees use to learn and help the senior *Ustads*. He had a happy married life having eight sons, seven of whom died and he was living his life in deep sorrow. This psychologically makes sense that grief and fear of losing the last son was what kept him devoted in his work all the time. He died in 1920 or 1922 with the same fear and grief. He also worked for the king of Afghanistan. The travel to Kashmir, Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries gave him a chance to assimilate the techniques and expertise of all the places in his work.

It took several years to complete the woodwork of Haji Ahmad Gull and Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli and was the result of single genius's work as far as *punjali* art of *havelis* is concerned.

#### **5. 12. Windows:**

Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli is well lit and well ventilated through its windows which are in itself master pieces of art. The *bala-khana* gets sunlight and ventilation through the courtyard. The windows open in the facades; inspired by flat Mughal arches. This results in an arcade around courtyard.

The stained glass windows are constructed of strips of wood that have channels to insert glass panes. The panes are fixed between two pieces of wood which are glued together without nails (Alin 2014).

Windows and doors in Karim Bakhsh haveli demonstrate the most balanced decor from the Mughal and British period. Although both are culturally opposite but with the modification and mixture of the two, their strategic position were at ease to adopt and mingle the foreign influences with indigenous traditions. We see the windows placed in arches from the atrium and the spandrels join a cusped arch<sup>11</sup> to enhance the beauty of the window frame.

---

<sup>11</sup> Multi foil arch, an arch with cusps or foils

The arch used in the haveli is from Mughal era of Jahangir. Magnificent architecture is produced. It was actually thanks to the artisans of Peshawar. The typical Mughal frames have windows from the Gothic churches of Britain. The window panes have stylized cross strips designed to cross each other. The translucent blue, red, and green glass pieces fitted in them create a dramatic effect filled with light. Generally, Gothic windows are pointed from the top but here, to accommodate this Gothic British style into Mughal arch, another trefoil is added to fit the shape in arc comfortably.



Fig. 5. 21. Stain glass window



Fig. 5. 22 Pencil sketch by researcher

The designs of the wooden stained glass windows are based on square and triangular pattern.



Fig. 5 .23. Researcher artist drawing the design of window pane. Photograph by



Fig. 5. 24 View of a stained glass window. Photograph by researcher

For better understanding of the audience, a little history of the gothic windows is traced. When ribbed vault was developed, the pointed arch was adopted as a matter of necessity. Gothic churches have pointed arch. The style was introduced in England through the French monastic order. The French designer W William rebuilt the east part of the Canterbury Cathedral after its destruction in 1174. This was a new style known as spring time of the style. Built in 1220 (Norwich 115). The same style of Salisbury cathedral has been adopted in the Karim Bakhsh haveli. He had his business office in London and had friends in parliament so had a chance to see and get influenced by the British architecture with an oriental touch. Now in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, about 1920 or so it was the time when the cultural scenario of Peshawar was changing with the adoption of modern ideas in architecture. If we look at these Gothic windows in Karim Bakhsh haveli and compare them with Gull Ahmad Haveli windows with arasis, decorated screens, the windows of Karim Bakhsh haveli are more functional as well as decorative. When Karim Bakhsh decided for these stained glass windows in his house, at that time glass was already being manufactured in India. It was not less than a thrilling experience for him to lead towards glamour to incorporate the carved wooden decoration around.

### **5. 13. Use of traditional *Jali* in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli:**

*Jali* stone screens with pierced were in use long before Mughals in India. But in Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli the same technique has been applied in wood.

In atrium there is a rise of five feet to the *bala-khanas* that serves as ventilation roshan dans for the teh khana below.

The pattern of the *jali* is fully complimenting the woodwork in the rest of the haveli. The windows of these cellars are in full harmony and balance. They can be opened to take the big objects to the basement.

In all respects the comfort and luxury goes side by side in the haveli.





Fig. 5. 25 Jali Screen or ventilators. Photograph by researcher



Fig. 5. 26 View of jail. Photograph by researcher

#### **5.14. Decorative patterns and motives used in wood carving of Karim Bakhsh haveli:**

##### **Kharbujiya style decoration used in woodwork of haveli:**

Kharbujiya<sup>12</sup> is a term that local Indians artisans used for hemispherical structure, which is dome shaped externally with vertical flutes on its surface like a musk melon (Nath 1986: 69). Kharbuja is a local name for melon. There are eight kharbujiyas in the atrium of Karim Bakhsh haveli, two in each corner, on the top of the door and windows that are completely balancing the whole wood decoration of the atrium.

These kharbujiyas are carved neatly and the bulge of the kharbuja provided a little shade to the door or window.

It is in complete harmony to the arabesque design above it and the rest of the carving around. Although there is a great variety of design in the woodwork of the atrium doors and windows, but still the whole structure is in complete harmony.

This shows the tireless job of the designer who decided the place for each design and motive and the artist who implemented it with the same zeal.

We can see in figure 5.27 and 5.28 the beautiful composition of Kharbujiya design in all corners of the courtyard.

The variety of design in the wood work of the courtyard makes the onlooker in state of seduction. The photographs on the next page show the detail of Kharbujiya carving and reflects the aesthetic taste and understanding of balance of design of the wood carver. It seems that he has very carefully decided for this motive to be carved for enhancing the oriental look of the wood work as a whole. It also gives a feeling of a half dome.

---

<sup>12</sup> Musk melon is kharbuja in Urdu





Fig.5 .27 View of Kharbujiya carving. Photo by researcher



Fig. 5. 28. detail of kharbujiya design. Photo by researcher

### 5.15. Arabesque:

Arabesque is a typical Islamic design. In sixteenth century Europe, the term 'Moresque' was used to describe any intricate oriental pattern (Michell 1978:17). A little later, 'Arabesque' became the name for exotic designs in eastern interior décor. During Umayyad period up to tenth century Greek craftsmen were still using in Cordova. These artists used their ideas and skills to form a synthesis of Greek traditions and Islamic artistic requirement (Michell 1978: 98).

From Umayyad, the pattern went in the hands of the *Abbasid carver* and came in contact with Persia. Mongol rulers brought with them Chinese influences of delicacy and Arabesque became more refined. The



Fig.5 .29 Detail of Arabesque. Photograph by researcher

Timurid came to rule India with Babar, and each culture changed arabesque a little. During the great Mughals, the style of architecture and decoration developed with Persian influences. It emerged at its best during the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (1628- 1658).

Arabesque is an Islamic design and most Islamic designs usually originate from the center; they increase in size as they grow. They gracefully flow into variations and change forms, acquire different contours while following the same theme and can elegantly occupy every space of any size and shape with increasing

beauty. They can be made as small as the artist feels or as broad as infinity. They are miraculous in their conception.



Fig. 5. 30 Detail of Arabesque 2. Photograph by researcher

We can see arabesque in Sethi haveli at its most developed form with the concept of logically and rhythmically filling the space. The tendrils, leaves and stems twist and turn with amazing plasticity and flow. This reminds us the female figure of ancient India. Since Abdul Hakim Jan spent many years of his life in Bombay, he developed his skills with traditions of South India. The flower in the center looks like the head of a flexible dancer, and shows a calculated effort of the artist.

There are twenty such spandrels in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. All made by one master and reveals his mastery of composition and arrangement of small and large leaves in harmonious manner.

#### **5. 16. Mustakka in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli:**

All windows of the haveli have nook shafts on each side. They have rope pattern around them like Mughal architecture and the term used to describe them is Mastakkas. Here is a simple zig-zag arrangement embellishing on the surface. The bases are most decorated, molded in round oriental vases, one on top of the other. The leaves on top are spread gently. There are two more vase shaped designs elegantly carved on each other ending up with the cusp arch. Simple and stylized lotus leaves carved in varied size with finally molded scales of a fish, from the rich décor of the nook shaft bases. Carving in high relief is reminiscent of

Abdul Hakim Jan's day in Bombay. Scales of a fish as a motive is a typical south Indian style of decoration. The delicacy is fully balanced with the whole wooden structure in the atrium.



Fig. 5. 31. Image Showing Mastakkas. Photograph by researcher



Fig. 5. 32 Detail of pillar. Photograph by researcher





Fig. 5. 33 Carved attached capital of pillar



Fig.5. 34. Drawing by researcher

### 5.17. *Roshan dan*<sup>13</sup> or ventilators:

As the tradition of the Subcontinent, the havelis had a magnificent system of light and air. The word *Roshan dan*, a combination of Urdu and Persian means source of light. All the *roshan dans* of Karim Bakhsh haveli are decorative and functional. They not only add beauty to the building but also provide light and air in the room.



Fig. 5. 35. The sliding stained glass *roshan dans*. Photograph by researcher

We can appreciate the beauty of these *roshan dans* with their coloured and transparent glass mosaic.



Fig. 5. 36 sliding *roshan dans*. Photo by author

---

<sup>13</sup> Persian word meaning light path

Figure 5.36 shows another common style of *roshan dan* that can be seen in many other havelis of the Sikh and British period, but there is no doubt that they are more intricately carved and finished with small circular flowers and delicate creeper type design all around the ventilator. We can see this: when closed it acts as a source of light from the transparent glass but when opened, it brings air in the room.

In figure 5. 37 we can see an eye shaped roshan dan that can be considered a specialty of the Sethi haveli. There is a carved ventilator on top of every *kharbujiya* arch. These are eight in number in the atrium. Transparent glass is fitted in the iris for the light. There are small roseate designs around it with green and red glass. When the carved portion is closed, sunlight and coloured rays penetrate into the room, and when



Fig. 5. 37 Eye shaped Roshan dan. Photograph by researcher

it opens fresh air and brightness of the air enters the room.

It has been mentioned that Sethis were deeply religious in their thought and always preferred to work for the betterment of the common public. It is always true that the turbulent history of Peshawar had threats of war and destruction with the progress and modernization entering the region. The place always had its roots in mysticism. So it can be said that this unusual shape of eyes chosen for ventilator may have some Sufistic approach as eye being the window to the soul. Eye as a window of the inner self of humans is a symbolic point for religious Muslims. They might have used deep thoughts before creating it in the house. This roshan dan is rare and unique and was chosen for the galleries above to maintain parda, while female of the house watch some event in the courtyard from the gallery.

### 5.18. Ling chi motive:

Ling chi is a motive adapted from China. When Mangols brought it to Persia it was modified to a cloud band and was used to balance the intricate effect of arabesque (Kuhnel 1968:106).



Fig. 5. 38 View of Ling chi design in the haveli. Photograph by researcher

In figure 5.34 we can see a drawing of this projected ling chi by the researcher. As mentioned earlier, these ling chi designs are used here to give rest to the eye from detailed arabesque around it. Mughals, decedents of the Mangols might have brought this with them. The leaves look like a stylized shape of lotus leave. It is carved in relief on horizontal and vertical bands. And it may be considered as a beginning to simplicity by using these simple motives in architecture side by side to the intricacy.

It can be concluded that a large variety of decorative designs, motives and patterns are used, which have a trail of its own cultural history and adaptation from other cultures or modernized version of it. The whole building is visually balanced in terms of design whether it is woodwork, *Naqqashi* or *aina kari*. Nothing is out of place and nothing is imbalanced.



## CHAPTER 6

### CHEENI KHANAS, FRESCO PAINTINGS AND COMPARISON WITH A SIKH HAVELI IN RAWALPINDI

#### 6. 1. *Cheeni khanas*:

The main focus of the thesis revolves around the Art and Architecture of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli Peshawar, so it will be necessary to discuss the highly embellished *Cheeni khanas* and Fresco paintings of the haveli. All the *bala-khanas* of the ground floor are decorated with rich Cheeni khanas, which is an arched recession-like window having many small arches like *Jharokas* with delicate mirror work to display



Fig. 6. 1 *Cheeni khana* with *aina kari*. Photograph by researcher

chinaware plates, bowls and glasses from Russia, Bukhara and many other countries. Karim Bakhsh Sethi used to travel to these countries a lot for business purpose and was gifted by friends or bought them with his own love for decoration. (*Cheeni khanas* with other Sethis like Rabia Sethi still display the remainder of these precious articles).

A study of the *Cheeni khanas* of this haveli shows that the decorative traditions of the *Cheeni khanas* were evolving as niches were painted gilded and mirrored (Khan and Imdad). The *Cheeni khans* were mirrored and painted with motifs and floral bouquets in vases. The result was that these mirrors not only beautified them but also reflected the objects displayed in them. These *Cheeni khanas* cover almost two-third of the wall. Starting at 3ft from the floor and rising up to the cornice.



Fig. 6 .2. Detail of Gilded stucco and mirror work on Cheeni khan. Photo by researcher

All the Cheeni khans are arranged on the central wall, sometimes forming a mental piece on the fire place and sometimes without it. Sethis' interaction with the British resulted in the introduction of fireplaces in the center of the haveli rooms (oral information by Saleem Sethi). Previously, the Cheeni khana used to

occupy the central and focal position in the room. Now, the fire place was fully in harmony with the Cheeni khana decoration, which created a blend of colonial and Indian culture.



Fig. 6. 3. *Cheeni khana* above a fire place in the center of a room. Photograph by researcher

Some *Cheeni khanas* are embellished with *naqqashi* and *aina kari* around them while others do not have these. In general, all the <sup>14</sup>*dalans* and *bala khanas* of Karim Bakhsh haveli have Cheeni Khanas, either occupying a very large area in the room or are built on fire places or cupboards forming an arcade.

---

<sup>14</sup> Sometimes used for sehan and sometimes for sitting hall

The niches are painted with floral designs with bright colours, which further enhance the beauty of this interior decoration.



Fig. 6 .4 Detail of the painted niche. Photograph by researcher

Sometimes the *Cheeni khans* are erected on the upper portion of the cupboards or doors to form decorative structure as a whole. The borders are decorated with stucco and glass mosaic and with colorful painted niches giving the whole piece a decorative quality.



Fig. 6. 5. View of Stucco boarder. Photograph by researcher





Fig. 6 .6. View of a wall with fresco. Photograph by researcher

## 6. 2. Paintings in the haveli:

As discussed earlier Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli is a complete combination of all sorts of decorative elements starting from the glorious woodwork, ceilings and naqqashi to the splendid *Cheeni khanas*. They have used the fresco technique of painting in the representation of the floral designs at various locations in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli.

## 6. 3. Oldest technique of mural painting:

Before discussing the technique of fresco painting used in the Sethi haveli, a brief introduction of mural painting will be discussed here. As Gardner said about different techniques of Fresco painting, starting from Fresco Secco. He says it is considered the oldest technique of mural painting. This is a dry plaster technique with Pigment, water and binder, whereas Buon Fresco is with pigment and lime water on damped plaster. Another technique closely related to Fresco Secco, in which alkaline resistant pigments, ground in water,

is applied on wet lime plaster surface. In this case the drying plaster forms a chemical Bond with pigment and becomes a part of it. This technique is more durable and brilliant, but best suited for dry climate areas” (Gardner, Helen 1986: 546- 47).

The Mural paintings at Karim Bakhsh haveli are Frescos and supposedly Buon Fresco. If we discuss the history of Mural Painting, the earliest examples are from pre Historic period, especially Altamira from Spain and Lascaux from France, some 30,000 to 10,000 BC old (Mahmood 2001 142- 43).

#### **6. 4. Material, style and technique of Rajput paintings and its influence in the haveli work:**

A brief introduction of Rajput painting is here because we can see their influence in Sethi haveli which has influence of Mughal miniatures in haveli frescos.

“Rajput paintings were normally so small that one could hold in hand and admire. Natural and vegetable pigments were used in their making. The painters usually were from low class like <sup>15</sup>*Tarkhan* or carpenters, they learnt from each other or from father to son”.

“The patrons of Rajput paintings were members of the royalty and mobility of the many courts of Rajasthan, Central India and Panjab hill states, an area stretching from the foothills of the western Himalayas south eastwards to the central region of the gigantic plain and west to the barren deserts of the Thar in Rajasthan. Rajput paintings may there for be defined as art covering the great expanse of many principalities in the north of the Subcontinent” (Roda 2008: 9).

As Rajput paintings were kept in *Pothikanas* (storerooms), they were always treated as treasures. They were kept in safe custody and these paintings were a part of the dowries of noble girls of the Rajputs. This statement may or may not be true, but this shows their great respect and love for the art of painting. The followers of Rajput traditions through Mughals also gave importance to these paintings and decorated their rooms with them.

---

<sup>15</sup> Used normally for woodworker. Not furniture maker

A remarkable combination of regional schools of painting took place at the Muslim and Hindu courts of Northern India between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These Indian paintings still appeal to the people and they love to have them in their private collections. The Mughals honored these artists unusually. They were generally artisans of no special status; they were hereditary craftsmen, who were traditionally learning from each other.

“The medium used by artists was gouache, mineral, vegetable and animal pigments mixed with gum Arabic, often embellishment in gold and silver, applied to a prepared paper or more rarely cloth support. A finished work was often mounted with a wide boarder, which was decorated with colour and gold. Rajput paintings had an integral boarder, often a bright lacquer red. Although Indian paintings are nowadays seen hung on the walls, but they were not meant for wall display. In the palaces their designs were sometimes enlarged – and coarsened – in mural paintings, of which a few examples survived” (Topsfield 1984: 5).

It can be said that the Mughal courts were a hub of influences that not only had Rajput and Persian influences but also had western influences through the gifted paintings that came to India. All these influences can be seen in the murals of Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli murals that came to the artists of the haveli through Mughal art, which was already an amalgamation of the Persian and local traditions of painting. The area of Subcontinent has from the very beginning been a house for one of the oldest civilizations of the world, so it has been catching the eye of many people from the West and East as far as art and craft is considered. It has always been rich culturally. Not only people outside this region have been getting inspiration from the art of the region but it has been a root and hub of inspiration for all the generations to come (Marie 1967: 7-9).

According to Srivastava book titled Punjab Paintings, early reference regarding the technique of painting can be found in *chitra sutra*. The artists belonging to this school of art depended on local materials for their training. When they had mastery in using paper, brush and colors, then only were they accepted as court painters. In medieval times the technique had developed in Rajasthan and hence slowly reached Punjab (Srivastava 1983: 63).

### 6. 5. Mural paintings in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli:

After a brief introduction to the fresco painting technique and its application by the locals, it will be more understandable how the owners used frescos to enhance the aesthetic value of the building.

The haveli in general has decorative motives with floral patterns along with some geometric design, which are fully going with the overall decorative style of the haveli.



Fig. 6. 7. Decorative bands of fresco around the Naqqashi ceiling. Photograph by researcher

Some of these decorative designs have been copied for the purpose of understanding, how these designs were enlarged. The colours used are bright and in complete harmony with the ceiling Naqqashi. These painted designs show that the artist and the owner, both had a good sense of colour balancing and harmony. The way the motives are repeated reflect that it must have been done in the same way of enlargement as artists enlarge the tile or textile design by repeating it as mirror images so that the same pattern can be enlarged to a wider surface.





Fig. 6. 8. View of borders around a ceiling in Sethi haveli Karim Bakhsh. Photo by author

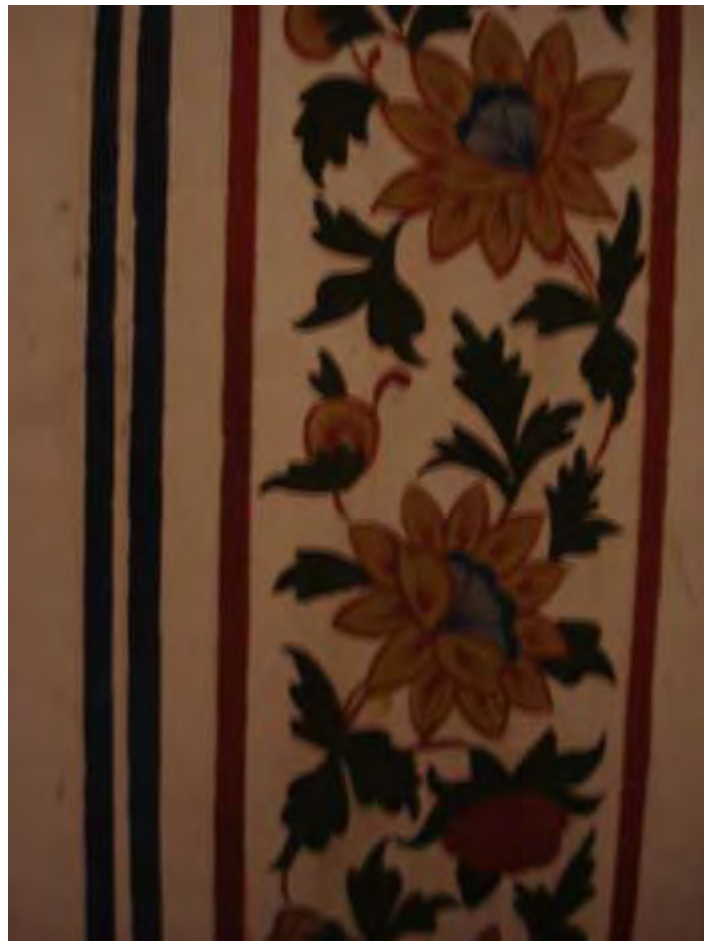


Fig. 6. 9. Detail of the creeper floral design with intricate motives. Photograph by researcher



Fig. 6. 10. Detail of design at the verge of destruction, karim Bakhsh haveli. Photo by author



Fig. 6. 11. A sample from Khem Bedi Singh haveli Kallar Sayedan Rawalpindi Photograph by researcher.

Figure 6.10 and 6.11 reflect the similarity in style of painting and colour scheme in both havelis frescos. It was reported during research related to Khem Bedi Singh haveli, that the artists who painted these murals were actually trained by the Mughals. This proves that the artists who worked in both havelis, miles apart must have been trained by Mughal painters, explaining why similar characteristics can be seen in the work.



Fig.6.12 View of a wall, fresco painting with floral motives. Photograph by researcher

#### **6. 6. Comparison of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli with Sikh haveli in Rawalpindi:**

The haveli of Haji karim Bakhsh Sethi is less than 200 years old, whereas the Sikh haveli of Khem Bedi Singh in Kallar Sayedan Rawalpindi is almost 200 hundred years old. The Sikh haveli under comparison is the one that was documented as a case study for my M. Phil thesis. The purpose of this comparison is to discuss the similarities and differences of these two havelis and to point out that how local materials and available influences in the region became sources of inspiration for the owners of both the havelis. In both areas, the prevailing influences were mostly from great Mughals, so generally Islamic designs have been

utilized in windows, jails and specially fresco paintings. As per general design predominant in the area of Subcontinent, both havelis have a general square plan with courtyard in the middle and rooms around it.

#### **6.7. Material used in both havelis:**

In both havelis, local material is preferred but Sethis used some imported materials too for their havelis. These include wrought iron railings and wood. Bricks were used for the construction of Karim Bakhsh haveli Peshawar whereas Khem Bedi Singh haveli was made with stone as a basic material, called Ashlar masonry. Wood has been used in both the havelis but in Karim Bakhsh haveli a great variety of wood has been used due to the owner in the wood business and had great love for decoration, where as in Khem Bedi Singh haveli only Sheesham has been used for windows and doors.

The basic similarity in both havelis is in decoration and significance of the residence. Both the havelis have some other significance apart from being a dwelling. Karim Bakhsh haveli was used for social and business purpose and Khem Bedi Singh haveli was being used for social and religious gatherings for both Sikhs and Hindus.

The central courtyard of both the havelis brings the viewer into another world of charisma. When we enter the courtyard of Karim Bakhsh haveli the magnificent wood carved arcaded windows of the bala-khanas take us to an unbelievable excellence of workmanship and artistry. The beautifully carved woodwork and stained glass windows and doors are so perfectly done that it shows the lifetime achievement of the artist. This also shows the aesthetic sense and generosity of the owner that persuaded him to spend the large amount on acquiring different types of wood for different purpose and hiring the most expert artists who worked on it. Same is the case with Khem Bedi Singh haveli at Kallar Sayedan. When we enter the courtyard, we are in front of the most magnificent exemplary fresco paintings covering all the arched pillars in the atrium.





Fig. 6.13. A view of woodwork from the atrium. Photograph by researcher

In figure 6. 13 we can appreciate the magnificent wood work of the Karim Bakhsh haveli which is a result of hard work of the artists who gave importance to the variety of design and intricacy in the haveli decoration.

Whereas figure 6. 14 shows the same love and dedication of the painters and artists who worked in detail while painting the frescos of Khem Bedi Singh haveli at Kallar Sayedan as Karim Bakhsh haveli wood carvers did. The technique used is fresco painting for which artists who were trained by Mughal miniature painters came from Lahore. Though Persian, and Rajput painting influences can also be seen.

Bright colours are used, while preparing the surface with a thin layers of white plaster and the pictures are painted. In figure 6. 14 we can see the courtyard with columns and arches is filled with images, both from secular and religious themes. The religious themes are not only related to Sikh religion but are also related to Hinduism. In secular themes, flora and fauna have also been painted with geometrical designs and motives. These designs are similar to those in Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli in Peshawar.



Fig. 6. 14. A view of Khem Bedi Singh haveli Kallar Sayedan Rawalpindi. Photo by author



Fig. 6. 15. Frescos in Khem Bedi Singh haveli.  
Photo by author



Fig. 6.16. Frescos in Karim Bakhsh haveli  
Photo by author.

Figure 6.15 and figure 6. 16 reflect the similarities in the frescos of both havelis, but Karim Bakhsh haveli has more concentration on woodwork and ceiling naqqashi. Whereas Khem Bedi Singh haveli has a large treasure of fresco painting that can be seen not only in the atrium but in other rooms of the Khem Bedi Singh haveli.

The woodwork in Khem Bedi Singh haveli is much simpler as compared to that of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli. But we can see the use of Islamic motives especially star shape can be seen in figure 6. 17 jharoka.



Fig. 6. 17. Window Jharoka in Khem Bedi Sigh haveli Kallar Sayedan. Photo by author



Although this woodwork is quite simple as compared to Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli, but we can still see the love for intricacy and the use of Islamic design in figure 6.18.



Fig. 6. 18. Khem Bedi Singh haveli star shape Jali. Photo by researcher

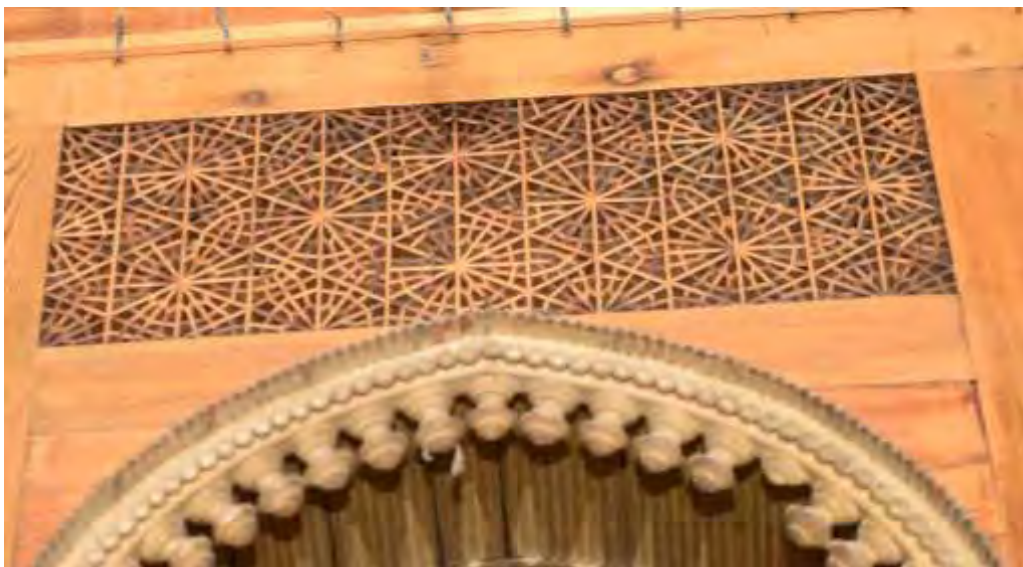


Fig.6 .19 Star shape Jali in Karim Bakhsh haveli. Photo by researcher

The Jali pattern and the punjali reveal the love that owners of both havelis had for Islamic geometric decorative design.



The purpose of this comparison of the two havelis that were constructed at different places by different people having different religious affiliations is to prove that love for aesthetics is beyond boundaries of religions and regions. It all entirely depends on the available material, artists, craftsmen and the taste of the owner who commissions the building. We can clearly see in both havelis the art and architectural trends and prevailing influences in the region of Subcontinent, which were mostly Mughal with few colonial influences.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly difficult to protect old buildings in civilian community without the cooperation or help of some government department. It is however feasible to systematically work for the restoration and renovation of the buildings with their original feel. All the buildings are unique in their own way and it is the duty of the researchers to document these dilapidated treasures of their country. The research was not fascinating only for the researcher but it will be appealing for the art lovers who take interest in decorated dwellings. It has been concluded how comfort and aesthetic taste remained the utmost priorities of the Sethis making these *havelis* worthwhile for the viewers in general and people who are related to art in particular. The Mughal, and later Sikh and British elements of decoration have been mingled in a very creative way in the Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* Peshawar.

It can be said with confidence that with the help of all the methods of research applied, the researcher was able to extract true information from the sources available. Sethi *haveli* is not just a residence, but a state of the art museum for the future generations. The main driving force behind this research is the love for art and decorative buildings and it resulted in documentation of the art and architecture of the Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* from the eyes of an artist and art enthusiast. To understand the art of the *haveli*, and to understand the elements of design utilized in the *haveli*, sketches and paintings have also been made.

In general terms, a *haveli* is a fortified structure that is a complex of multiple buildings in its boundary. It is called a *haveli* due to its enormous size or because the building has some other social, economic, business or religious importance. The walled city of Peshawar is overwhelmingly filled with *havelis* and buildings that are getting older day by day and are losing life. Very less attention is being paid to restore and preserve these state of the art living places. Fortunately, the *haveli* under discussion is taken over by the Department of Archaeology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which takes us to a promising future of the building.

Since long it has been a norm in Peshawar that events and stories have been remembered by heart or memorized rather than documenting them. That is what Qissa Khwani bazar is famous for – providing oral

information from one person to another; this also signifies the name of the bazaar, bazaar of story tellers. The first part of the research deals with the history of Peshawar and the Sethi family (very few written sources) while the second part focuses on the art and architecture of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli Peshawar. This research unveiled that Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli has always had some social and business significance in addition to being just a residence. This haveli and other havelis in *mohallah Sethian* are owned by the *Sethi* family and have also been used as business centers. Sethi is the family name of a renowned business family of Peshawar; who were deeply religious and constructed a lot of bridges, roads and mosques for the purpose of social welfare. Karim Bakhsh, who was involved in International business, was well travelled and had a chance to bring different influences to Peshawar. The purpose of this research is to put light on this hidden treasure of woodwork, stained glass, fresco paintings, *Cheeni khanas* and decorated ceilings. This research also provides very significant information about the materials and the artists who worked extensively on the decorative work of the haveli Karim Bakhsh in particular.

Very important information is provided through this research about the area of Peshawar. Its geography and history has been discussed in detail, which is a great source of knowledge for the researchers who want to work on District Peshawar. This research actually has two phases, the first phase gives information about Havelis in Peshawar District; however it was not possible to visit all the *havelis*. But by organizing frequent visits to the *havelis* in Peshawar it was discovered that the streets of certain areas of Peshawar are filled with these Havelis. The reason for this may be that the business elites during their stay in Peshawar established their business in these areas. *Mohallah Sethian* is in the center of Peshawar city. The research also tells about the strategic position of Peshawar. This place has always been used as trade route and center where businessmen used to come and market their goods. Then arrival and stay of businessmen as guests of Sethi Karim Bakhsh in the havelis was a common practice. The second phase of research is related to the case study of Karim Bakhsh Sethi Haveli. In this phase the research revealed very interesting information about the area of Peshawar.

While discussing about the *haveli*, the purpose of certain halls in the building have been discussed. The elites had special interest in constructing enormous residences. Likewise, it was a common practice amongst Sethis to build outstanding living places. Big halls were constructed in these *havelis* to host events for the participation of International guests from business community. Although Sethis already had established sub-offices for their businesses in other countries like Russia, China, Afghanistan, Bombay and England, but still this haveli was their main business center in Pakistan.

Important information about the geographical and, historical condition of Peshawar and introduction to Sethi family has been provided. The greatest constraint in research was the oblivious behavior of the Sethi family members about the history of their own family. The oral information gathered from the elderly people of the area has no match to any of the information gathered from the books. These people shared such information about the area that is really first hand original information related to Sethi family. Mr Saleem Sethi a retired civil servant of Pakistan had been a great help in this regard. He provided an unpublished book about the history of Sethi family. Very important facts related to the history of Sethi family are being discussed.

After discussing all the information about other Havelis in Peshawar District, the main case study, art and architecture of Karim Bakhsh Sethi haveli is presented. This case study is important because of two reasons; one is that this haveli has not been documented in detail prior to this research with special emphasis on art and architecture. Although a few researchers have partially documented this haveli with other point of view, but this haveli deserved to be valued like something more than an ordinary residence, and more like a work of art that expresses the aesthetic sense of the owners of the haveli.

The research stands out as unique when compared to previous work on the same haveli because in this research, major focus is on the art, decorative motives and elements, woodwork, ceilings along with the architecture of the haveli as a whole. The haveli of Karim Bakhsh Sethi has been looked upon with the worldview of an artist in order to bring perspective that have never been explored before. That is why a lot

of sketches and paintings were made by the researcher and artist and included in the research for synthesis of the design.

Haveli architecture has also been discussed in detail. The study of architecture of haveli also tells us about the architectural styles that prevailed in subcontinent at the time. This architectural style adopted by the Sethi builders actually came into being after a long way of assimilation of different architectural styles of the Subcontinent, Central Asia and also the West, especially British style in the use of stained glass and wrought iron. The haveli shows Muslim influences, especially Mughal, in creating a building that is well lit, perforated and ventilated. The haveli combines in it, the use of local and imported materials in a harmonious way, so we can say convenience and luxury are going side by side in the haveli. Overall, the haveli represents the elite lifestyle of that time. Now that haveli is in the protection of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it can be said with confidence that it will be renovated and preserved from time to time on an as and when required basis.

The art of woodwork in the haveli is especially remarkable. It shows a great variety in wood carving, engraving and *khatam bandi*. The whole courtyard of ground floor is extensively filled with woodwork. In spite of the extensive woodwork there are fresco paintings as borders around the ceilings and on the walls of the *haveli*. To find the technique of painting used by these painters, a little history of mural paintings has been discussed. That not only tells us the types of mural paintings but also explains by the analysis of the broken wall painting parts that these frescos are painted in Buon fresco, a technique in which painting is done on wet plaster forming a chemical binding with the surface. That increases the permanence of the work. That is why these frescos are still in very good condition. They could have been in even better condition if proper care of the building was taken. But unfortunately no attention has been given to the preservation or restoration of the building before 2010. The previous restoration team also neglected the paintings in the *haveli*. The team, however, started the work but left it on the way. At many places the walls have been given a white layer to repaint these painted areas but maybe due to shortage of time, they were

unable to finish it. There are a few rooms that are completely covered with geometrical designs. All these painting are painted in rich colours.

While talking about the woodwork of the haveli, it is doubtlessly the most impressive work with a lot of variety in design. To analyze the designs it has been compared with the same kind of work done in other buildings of Subcontinent. The types of wood used in wood decoration with its source have also been discussed in detail. The most interesting fact is regarding the craftsmen who worked on this haveli. The wood carvers from Kashmir also mingled with the carvers of Peshawar to produce these remarkable results.

Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* is so loaded in its art, architecture, woodwork, and perforated Jalties that there is room for researchers for further research.

#### **Framing the study within the decorative frame work of the haveli:**

One of the first topics related to the background study is the other Havelis in Peshawar, is discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose to start from other Havelis was to look upon the prevailing construction and decorative styles in the Havelis of Peshawar. This study of other Havelis also proved how Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* is unique and different from them in terms of art and architecture and decorative style.

The decline of the Mughal Empire shaped a physical and social gap as the dependent *Umarah* could no longer afford to keep their lifestyles and the large estates called *Havelis* that went with them. Resultantly, many *havelis* were sub-divided or left out in multiple smaller units. The British replaced the Mughal *umarah* a new social hierarchy consisting of the notables. The ones who were ready to support them in all matters of governing the society. The merchants filled the social gap created by the *umarah*. So the newer typology of the merchant *Havelis* emerged and developed a place of respect in society as reported by Samra Mohsin Khan. Sethis were adored by the general public for their social work and help to the common people.

The thesis is filling a gap in the scholarly attention with regard to understanding the aesthetic beauty and art and architecture of Havelis in Peshawar in general and Karim Bakhsh haveli in particular.

The whole building was freshly measured and then checked against the plans made by other researchers, especially Dr Samra Mohsin Khan and then were reported in the research as authentic plans.

The city's elite *mohallahs* and business centers developed around the Major center (Bazaar-e-Qalan road) outlined by this architecture. In addition to the general study of the building, the researcher tried to find out the actual purpose of rooms of the haveli.

The major concern of the thesis is the art and architecture of the Karim Bakhsh haveli with special emphasis on its decorative elements. Obviously, in this struggle to find decorative elements, a need was felt to look for the artisans and artists who have hibernated with the passage of time. It was hard to locate the exact techniques of special arts like Naqqashi and Khatam bandi.

This thesis has demonstrated the detailed woodwork (Chapter 5), ceilings, windows and application of Islamic designs. The research talked about which artists worked here and what influences they brought with them that within these larger cultural and social changes affecting the transition of society going from the late Mughal to Colonial period.

The decorative work has been looked upon through the history up to the application of the design in Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli*. The decorative elements of *havelis* of the Mughal era underwent changes to integrate European elements and thus present an amalgamated style.

An important discussion taken up in chapter 6 is the Cheeni khanas, fresco paintings and comparison with a Sikh haveli in Rawalpindi. This important chapter shows the details of the art prevailing in the Havelis that are due to the modernization at the verge of neglecting and deterioration. And also discussed and compared with another research of mine about a Sikh haveli. It helped in finding similarities and differences to show how artist might have travelled and how influences were adopted irrespective of place and religious affiliations.

The overall discussion on the haveli of Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi developed a clear hierarchy by the study of other *havelis* in Peshawar and my previous research of Rawalpindi Havelis that this Sethi haveli is visually more dominant, both in terms of size and richness as well as beauty of decorative elements. This is what makes this haveli the most outstanding haveli in the vicinity of bazar-i-Qallan Peshawar.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

The *haveli* is studied through documentation, drawing, paintings, photography and archival materials, but the core architectural study is extended to the wider and complex use of decorative elements employed in the *haveli*. These areas exerted influences as well as providing a stage for the development of the Sethi *haveli* and provide room for further research related to the protection renovation and restoration of the *haveli* Karim Bakhsh Sethi and other Sethi *Havelis* as well.

This study hopefully is one of its kind that the art and architecture of the *haveli* is being looked upon with the eye of an artist. It will particularly lead to more research about the historic and state of the art architecture of Peshawar and steps towards its documentation and conservation.

The first vital step to scholarly research no doubt is to give tangible and intangible heritage correct meaning to protect its value. This dissertation will provide a basis for other scholars to study *havelis* of Pakistan that are available in all the provinces of Pakistan as important structural and historic elements of the landscape and history of the cities. Within the city of Peshawar, the thesis endeavors to give importance to the domestic architecture of the city as important heritage sites that can be used as tourist centers for the visitors who are particularly interested in the palace like *havelis* of Peshawar.

I suggest that a team of artists well trained in the restoration of fresco, *naqqashi*, *aina kari*, stucco and woodwork should be organized by the department of archaeology for the preservation and restoration as soon as possible to avoid further decay of this *haveli* as a whole.

There can be another method that can be adopted for the preservation and restoration of the *haveli*. That is to use students of art and young painters and researchers to help the experts on voluntary bases or through internship programs. Now the point is that why these *naqqashi*, frescos, wood carvings and *punjalis* need to be preserved. They need proper restoration because the artists, who were a treasure are vanishing with the passage of time.



As this haveli is being used as a small museum with all its original art work, the other *havelis* of the Sethis can also be taken over by the department before it is too late. This place can be used as a teaching Institute for the students of art who are interested in woodwork, punjali, stained glass and mural painting. They can go there with their teachers and learn the whole process of art work. In this process, local artisans can be engaged and used to guide the modern experts and students. Regular visits can be arranged for the college and University students paying a small amount of entry ticket to generate income for the renovation.

During this research it was realized that the Sethis had a special importance in the economic growth of the area and were involved in international trade. They were well travelled and were a source of bringing modern ideas from the West, Central Asia and Kashmir that mingled with the local style of construction and building decoration. That is why we can see a unique cooling system in the building and supply of water from the same well from basement to the top floor. So it is unavoidable to ignore the importance of Karim Bakhsh Sethi *haveli* being a role model for the art and architecture lovers.

My research will definitely open new vistas in the field of further research and learning. Researchers and experts will think about new ideas to protect these heritage places and also will publicize the strategies used by Sethis in this palace like dwelling. Haji Karim Bakhsh haveli is like a jewel in the heart of Peshawar with its decorative elegance and beauty. This haveli has been looked upon with the eye of an artist, who tried to bring to light its intricacy and love for aesthetic Islamic designs that have been employed in every corner of the haveli and has been looked upon by the researcher either by the naked eye or by the help of paint brush, pencil or camera. The researcher has tried to present the aesthetic and decorative elements of the Karim Bakhsh haveli in an appealing way not only for an artist and art lover but it will also impress a common man who looks at the images in this dissertation.

There is a need to define clear and realistic building protection goals to keep the building in its close to original condition for the future generations. Sethi havelis are not mere buildings but they reflect the whole era of cultural progression having its roots in the soil of Subcontinent where Indus valley civilization flourished.

## GLOSSARY

Aadab:	etiquette, the proper way of doing things.
aina-kari:	inlay mirror work
Aisle:	walk way, passage with columns
Aisle:	walk way, passage with columns
Ambulatory:	a passage provided to the pilgrims to go around a sacred place as a religious ritual
angun:	courtyard
Anthropomorphic:	symbolic
aroosi:	sash window
azaan:	call for prayer
bagh :	garden
bahi-khata:	current account registers
baithak:	formal sitting room
bait-ul-khila:	toilet/outhouse/privies
bait-ul-mal:	royal treasury
bala-khana:	raised room
balance and harmony	back to the world when need
bania:	moneylender; derived from the Sanskrit term vanjj meaning a merchant.
baolis:	step wells
baradari:	caste, extended family
Baradari:	a pavilion with twelve openings
Barsaat:	overhead bridge connecting two houses, which is enclosed
Basta:	window sash window
baverchi-khana:	kitchen

bazaar:	market
begum:	female head of the household
beruni:	external or public area (street)
Brahman:	a higher class of Hindus claiming monopoly over religious teachings, rituals, and
buggy-khana:	garage for carriages and buggies
Buon Fresco:	a technique of wall painting in which colours are applied on wet surface
Buon Fresco:	a technique of wall painting in which colours are applied on wet surface
burj:	tower
Capital:	it is a decorated place at the top portion of a pillar
chabootra:	raised platform
chajja:	overhang
charpai:	light bed with stretched woven hemp on a wooden frame
Cheeni-khana:	Elaborate niches that display decorative items
Chik:	Straw curtain
Chik:	Straw curtain
choki:	a square platform found on both sides of the main door
chowkidar:	guard at door
churidar mihrab:	cusped arch
Column:	a post; a vertical support
Cornice:	crowning projection; a molding at the corner between the ceiling and the top of a
daftar/daftar-khana:	office
dak:	post
dalal:	commission agent

dalan:	room
darban:	gate keeper
Darbar:	court
Darwaza:	door; but also used to indicate the large gateway into the city.
Dastaks:	passports/ knock
dastar-khawan:	tablecloth, cloth spread on the floor for eating
dehliz:	entrance
deodar:	a large Himalayan cedar
deorhi:	lobby, foyer
Deorhi:	an entrance room
Didar:	Physical view of some one
Diwan Khana:	a special place reserved for guests in the house
diwan:	head accountant
diwan-i-amm:	hall of public audience
diwan-khana:	men's office, main trade office where the owner of the business sits
Dopatta:	a scarf for covering head and breasts used by women in India and Pakistan
dukan:	shop
Dwelling:	residential place
Facade:	the face or front of a building
farshi nashist:	floor seating
Fillet:	Is a band used in architecture for calligraphic script, figurative reliefs or tile
Fresco:	A mural painting technique. Literal Italian meaning 'fresh
galli:	alley, street

gaz:	a yard in Mughal times (33 inches)
ghanta ghar:	clock tower
ghusal-khana:	bathroom
godam:	store
hammam:	bath house, usually used for public baths
hasht-behist:	nine-fold plan, mandala
haveli:	urban courtyard mansion
Hexagonal:	Six sided
hundi:	mercantile bills of credit
iwan:	façade
jagir:	estate
Jahangiri/Lahori cent:	small size bricks manufactured in Jahangir's era in Lahore.
Jali:	perforated
Jalli:	terracotta trellis
Jharoka:	an oriel window, for ventilation in a building
Jharokas:	protruding balcony, which is shuttered for <i>pardah</i>
Kabaili:	tribal people living on the India (currently Pakistan) and Afghanistan
Karakul:	lambskin
Karkhana:	local production units/small indigenous factories
kashi-kari:	glazed tile surface
khandani:	aristocratic
khatam-band:	parquet ceiling, also called <i>tarseem-band</i>
koochey:	streets.
Kotha:	roof terrace
Kucha:	street

Langer Khana:	a place where free food is supplied to all
Mardan Khana:	A special place in the house for men
Mehal:	Palace in Urdu language
mehman-khana:	guest quarters, guest house
Metaphysical:	A substance that does not have physical shape
mimar:	architect
minar:	tower
mistri:	architect/builder
mohalla:	urban residential neighborhood
monabat-kari:	painted stucco work
Mosaic:	art consisting of a design made of small piece of stone, coloured tile or glass
Mosaic:	art or design made of small piece of coloured stone, coloured tile or glass
Munsif:	Judge
Mural:	Mural is decoration which is done on a wall or a wall like big surface
Murid:	devotee
naqqash:	fresco painter
Octagonal:	eight sided
Parapet:	top edge of the building
parchin-kari:	stone inlay work
pardah:	segregation of women from the public view
patwar-khana:	land records office
Piir:	Saint

pinjarah-saz:	lattice workers
pinjra-kari:	latticed woodwork
punjali:	wooden lattice work also called pinjra-kari
pardah:	veiling of the face, gender segregation
qilla:	fort
qissa- khawans:	story tellers
rais:	rich aristocrat
Rajput:	literally meaning son of king; a cast of Rajisthan
Sehan:	courtyard
serai:	caravanserai, inn
Shaft:	a portion in between base and capital
Sheesham:	a Special kind of wood
Sheesham:	Indian rosewood
Stucco:	plaster or cement used for coating wall surface or molding into architectural
Sufi:	Muslim mystic ascetic
Tajori:	safe
Takht:	raised platform/ wooden bed for sitting or lying.
Takiya:	pillow or final resting place
Taq:	alcove, niche
Tarkhan:	wood carver, carpenter
Teh Khana:	basement
Tempera:	Technique of painting in which pigment is filled with egg yolk
Terracotta:	hard unglazed brownish- red earth ware, backed red clay

tonga:	horse carriage
Trefoil:	having three corners
Turret:	A small domed structure
umarah:	Mughal nobles
ustad:	master craftsman
veranda:	open structure with a roof, portico
waziri eent:	small size brick used in the Mughal era
Zanan Khana:	a special place reserved for women
zenan:	women's quarters
Zoomorphic:	a picture or painting comprising representation of birds or animals



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahluwalia, Roda. 2008. *Rajput paintings, romantic divine and courtly from India*. London: Published by the British Museum Press. A division of the British Museum Company Ltd 38 Russell square, London. WCIB 399.
- Ahmad, Ahmad. 1991. [http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/4239/1/WRAP\\_THESIS\\_Hazareesingh\\_1999.pdf](http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/4239/1/WRAP_THESIS_Hazareesingh_1999.pdf)  
Compiled and Published under the authority of the Punjab Government. (1897-98 2004) *Gazetteer of the Peshawar District*.
- Al-Hathloul, Saleh Ali. 2009. *Tradition, continuity and change in the physical environment*. Pakistan: The Allama Iqbal Open University.
- Amjad, Sayed Hussain. 1994. *Alam mein Intikhab Peshawar*. America: Published United States of America. Blackswan, 1998. Cambridge University Press.
- Asher, Catherine Blanshard. 1992. *Architecture of Mughal India*. America: Vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bateman, AS. 1972. *Babur Nama or Tuzuk-i-Baburi, trs. from Turki* New York: Published Economic mineral deposits, John William Sons New York 1972, p 727
- Bayly, Christopher Alan. 1983. *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*. Cambridge: North Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770-1870. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beisembiev, T. K. 2014. *Farghana's contacts with India in the 18th and 19th centuries*. (According to the Khokand chronicles): In Memory of Sir E. Denison Ross, the Eminent British Orientalist." **Journal of Asian History** 28, no. 2 (1994): 124-135
- Brown, Percy. 1981. *Indian Paintings under the Mughals*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publication
- Burnes, Alexander. 1994. *Travels into Bokhara*. England: being the account of a journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia. Also, Narrative of a voyage on the Indus, from the sea to Lahore. Performed

under the orders of the supreme government of India in 1831, 1832, 1833. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: EL Campbell, Jennifer Lynn. 2011. *Architecture and identity*. Toronto: the occupation, use, and reuse of

Mughal Caravanserais. Unpublished. PhD diss, University of Toronto.

Companion to the History of the Middle East 2005: 207-226 contestations in Bombay City, 1905-1925."

Unpublished. (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1999): Accessed February 22 2018.

Critchlow, Keith. 2001. *Islamic Patterns*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 181A High Holborn,

Cunningham. 1944. *History of the Sikhs*. Lahore: S. Chand and Co.

Dale, Stephen Frederic. 1994. *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600-1750*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Dani A. H. 1997. *Romance of the Khyber Pass*. Lahore: Sange Meel Publication, 25- Shahrah-E-Pakistan (Lower Mall) Lahore Pakistan.

Dani A.H. 1969. *Peshawar Historic City of Frontier*. Lahore: Sange Meel Publication, 25- Shahrah-E-Pakistan (Lower Mall) Lahore Pakistan.

Das, Himanish. 2005. *Principles of design and craftsmanship in the traditional architecture of Jaisalmer*.

London: Unpublished PhD diss. Cardiff University.

Eyüce, Ahmet. 2012. *Interdependence of Traditional House Form and Settlement Pattern*. Ntercultural understanding. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

F. Macshane. 1963. *Religion, Art and Culture*. Tokyo: Many Golden Ages.

Gandhi, Rajmohan. 2013. *Punjab: A History from Aurangzeb to Mountbatten*. New Delhi: Aleph

Gardner, Helen. 1986. *Art through the Ages*. London: Ardcourt Brace Jovanovich,

Publishers San Diego New York Chicago Atlanta Washington D.C. London Sydney Toronto.

Gazetteer of the Peshawar District 1897-98. 2004. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.

Gazetteer Peshawar Dist. 1931. 2008. *Peshawar City's Sethi Mohalla and Ander Shehr Bazaar*.

Islamabad: Lok Virsa.

Guillia Annalind Naglia, 2008. *Some histographical notes on the Islamic city, with particular references to the visual representation of the built city*. Leiden: Jayyusi, sk and et al. The city in the Islamic world.

Hakim, Besim Selim. 2010. *Arabic Islamic Cities; Building and Planning Principles*. Oxon: Routledge.

Handa, Omacanda and Madhu Jain. 2000. *Wood handicraft: a study of its origin and development in*

*Saharpur*. New Delhi: Indus Publication.

Hanifi, Shah Mahmood. 2008. *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State*

*Formation on a Colonial Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hardgrove, Anne. 2002. *Merchant houses as spectacles of modernity in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu*.

*Contributions to Indian sociology* 36, no. 1-2 (2002): 323-364.

Hillbrand, Robert. 2001. *Studying Islamic architecture: Challenges and Perspective*. *Architectural History* 46 2001.1-18.

Hosagrahar, Jyoti. 2005. *Indigenous modernities: negotiating architecture and urbanism*. Oxon:

Routledge.

Humbert, Claude. 1980. *Islamic Ornamental Design*. London: Fabre and Fabre Limited 3 Queen Square.

Ihsan H. Nadiem. 2007. *Persian-tiles at the Shah Sheragh Shrine at Shiraz, Peshawar Heritage .History*.

*Monuments*. Lahore: Sang- Meel Publication. 25 Shahraah-e- Pakistan

Ihsan H. Nadiem. 2007. *Peshawar Heritage. History. Monuments*. Lahore: Sang- Meel Publication.25

Shahraah-e- Pakistan.

Ijaz ul Haq Qudsi.1966. *Tazkarae Sufia-e- Sarhad*, Lahore: I Sang- Meel Publication.25 Shahraah-

e- Pakistan

Isaam El- Said and AYSE Parman, *Geometric conceptions in Islamic Art*, 15 november 2008. World of

Islam Festival

Jaffar, S.M. 2008. *Peshawar: Past and Present. City on the Frontier*. Karachi: edited by Ahmad Salim.

Jain, Shikha. 2002. *The havelis of Rajasthan, form and identity*. PhD diss., De Montfort University, 2002.

K. K. Aziz. 2004. *The Incoming of Islamic art Exploration in Religious Symbolism and Social Relevance*.

Lahore: Al Faisal Publishers, Maktaba-i- Jadeed Press.

Khan, Mamoonah. 2011. *Wazir Khan Mosque Rediscovered*. Lahore: Pakistan writers Cooperative Society

Lahore Pakistan.

Khan, Samra M. 2015. *Sustainable Architecture, Public Space, and the importance of Place Making*, in

Architecture and Sustainability. Belgium: Critical Perspectives for Integrated Design. Generating

Sustainability concepts from Architectural Perspectives, edited by Ahmad Z. Khan and Karen

Allacker. Acco, 2015.

38- 49.

Khan, Samra Mohsin. 2009. *Analysis of Environmental Sustainability and Architectural Design*.

Pakistan: Unpublished Masters diss., Allama Iqbal Open University, 2009.

Khan, Samra, Imdad, Aisha. 2011. *Analysis of Typological Evolution of Chini-khanas of the Sethi*

*Havelis, Mohalla Sethian, Peshawar*. Peshawar: *South Asian Studies*, 27, 1.

- King, Anthony D. 1987. *Colonial cities: global pivots of change*. Netherlands: In *Colonial cities; essays on Urbanism in a Colonial context*, 1985, edited by R J Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, 7-32. Springer Netherlands
- King, Anthony D. 1976. *Colonial urban development: Culture, social power and environment*. London: Routledge & Paul, 1976.
- King, Chris.2009. *The Interpretation of Urban Buildings: Power, Memory and Appropriation in Norwich Merchants' Houses. c.1400–1660.*" *World Archaeology* 41, no. 3 (2009): 471-488.
- Kuhnel, E.1966. *Islamic art and Architecture*. New York: Cornell University Press, 76-159.
- Levi, Scott. 1999. *The Indian merchant diaspora in early modern central Asia and Iran. Iranian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 483-512.
- Leyden, Erskine, William. 2006. *Memoirs of Babur (1926)*. Karachi: M. YU. Morozva. The encyclopedia of Pakistan. Editors Hafees Malik and Yuriv Gankovsky New sketch Graphics.
- Mehta, Rama. 1996. *inside the Haveli*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Metcalf, Thomas R. 2011. *Architecture and the Representation of Empire. India 1860-1910, Mughal Caravanserais*. Toronto: Unpublished PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011.
- Michell, George, and Currim, Mumtaz. 2007. *The Majesty of Mughal Decoration: the Art and Architecture of Islamic India*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- Nakatani, Sumie. 2013. *Hometowns of the Marwaris, Diasporic Traders in India. Regional Routes, Regional Roots?: Cross-Border Patterns of Human Mobility in Eurasia. SRC Comparative Studies on Regional Powers*, Issue:14 (2013) accessed november,2016
- Nath, R, "Jhroka An illustrated Glossary of Indo Islamic Architecture" The historiacal Research Documentation Programme Jaipur , p. 62
- Nilufer, F. 2004. *Hidden Morphological Order in an Organic City."**Protibesh* 9 (2004): 34-41.
- Norwich, Julius, John. 1998. *Great Architecture of the World*. New York Bonanza Books, p. 115

- Panicker, Shaji K. 2008. *Indian Architecture' and the Production of a Postcolonial Discourse: A Study of Architecture + Design (1984-1992)*. Adelaide: Unpublished PhD diss, University of Adelaide.
- Patel, Alka. 2012. *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*, edited by Alka Patel and Karen Leonard, 139-164. *Intercultural Understanding*, volume 2 (2012):17-24.
- Patel, Alka. 2012. *Mercantile architectural patronage in Hyderabad, late 18th -19th centuries in Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*. Boston: edited by Alka Patel and Karen Leonard, 139-164. Brill.
- Petrucchioli, Atillio. 2006. *The Courtyard House: Typological Variations over Space and Time*. In *Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future*. Oxon: edited by Brian Edwards, 2-26. Taylor & Francis.
- Pramar, Vickram Singh. 2005. *A Social History of Indian Architecture*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Prasad, Sunand. 2014. Plaque on the doorway informs us that the daftar-khana was constructed in Hijra 1319 which makes it 1901 in the Gregorian calendar. 94 National Register, Historic places of Pakistan, Mohalla Sethian, Peshawar.
- Prasad, Sunand. 1988. *The Havelis of north India: the Urban Courtyard House*. London: PhD diss., Royal College of Art.
- Prashad, Vijay. 2001. "The technology of sanitation in colonial Delhi". *Modern Asian Studies* 35,no. 01 : Publishing Co. P. 1& 3.
- Qazilbash. Rubina. 1996. "Decorative woodwork in Mohallah Sethian". Islamabad: *Journal of Central Asia*, Biannual Journal of International Association of the study of Cultures of Central Asia Vol XIX, No1. July 1996. pg 7

- R. Nath, Jharoka- 1989. *An Illustrated Glossary of Indo- Muslim Architecture*. Jaipur. The Historic Research P 25. Documentation program, Jaipur
- Rapoport, Amos. 1982. *The meaning of the built environment: A nonverbal communication approach*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Rapoport, Amos. 1988. *Levels of meaning in the built environment, in Cross-cultural perspectives in Nonverbal communication*. Toronto: edited by F. Poyatos, 317-336. Toronto: C.J. Hogrefe, 1988.
- Rapoport, Amos. 1969. *House form and culture*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Rapoport, Amos. 1980. *Vernacular architecture and the cultural determinants of form, in Buildings and society: Essays on the social development of the built environment*, edited by Anthony D. King, 283-305. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Ray, chaudhuri, Siddhartha. 2014. *Indian elites, urban space and the restructuring of Ahmedabad*  
*Raymond, André. "Urban life and middle eastern cities: the traditional Arab city*. London: A Representation and design. London: Rutledge, 2014. Representations, No. 6 (Spring, 1984): 37-65.
- Reynolds, John. 2002. *Courtyards: aesthetic, social, and thermal delight*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Richards, John F. 2010. *The Mughal Empire*. Vol. 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Routledge.
- S. H. Nasr. 1973. *The sense of Unity*. Chicago: Forword, in N. A. Ardalan and L. Bakhtiar, p. xi
- Sabzwari, Kamila. 2003. *The perishing havelis of Sindh*. Lahore: Ferozsons, Pakistan.
- Sandip Hazareesingh, "The colonial city and the challenge of modernity: urban hegemonies and civic
- Sethi, Mohammad Younis. 2002. *Peshawar ka Sethi Khandaan, Mukhtasir Ahwal*. (A brief account of the Sethi family of Peshawar) Peshawar: Unpublished Memoirs.
- Sethi, Moeena. August 2016. *See the author's discussion regarding the sale of the Sethi havelis and the Cooling system of the haveli*. Interview by author, March 16, 2014.
- Sharr, Adam (ed). 2002. *Reading architecture and culture: researching buildings, spaces, and Space*; An

- Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study, edited by Susan Kent, 9- 20. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Sinha, Amita. "From tradition to modernity: The role of the dwelling in social change." EDRA21, April (1990): 6-9.
- Stacey. Pakistan past and present. Stacey International 128 Kensington Church street, Cambridge. An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study, edited by Susan Kent, 9- 20. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Stuart, Cary Welch. 1985. *Indian and Pakistan Art and Culture 1300-1900*, America: The Metropolitan Museum of art., Mapin Publishing Private Ltd 1985. P. 194 *Study of Architecture + Design* (1984-1992). Unpublished PhD diss, University of Adelaide.
- Talbot, David Rice. 1975. *Islamic Art*. New York: Oxford University.
- Tillotson, Giles Henry Rupert. 2014. *Paradigms of Indian architecture: space and time in representation and design*. London: Routledge.
- Topsfield, Andrew. 1984. *Indian Court Painting*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Vandal, Pervaiz and Sajida Vandal. 2006. *The Raj, Lahore and Bhai Ram Singh*. Lahore: Research and Publication Centre, National College of Arts, 2006. Vol. 61#2, (2009): 12-25.
- Warren, E. Prioleau. 1896. *English Mantelpieces. I.* "The Decorator and Furnisher" 27, no. 6. (1896): 167- 167.
- Washbrook, David A. 1988. Progress and problems: South Asian economic and social history c. 1720–1860." *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 01 (1988): 57-96.
- Welch, Stuart Cary. *India and Pakistan Art and Culture, 1300- 1900*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art , Mapin Publishing P. 171.
- Zia, Muhammad Ibrahim. 2003. *Peshawar kefankar Filmomein*. Peshawar: Taj uddin Publications.
- Zia, Zia-ur-Rahman. 2004. *Peshawar Sher ka Mohalla Sethian aur Bazaar Ander Shehr* Compiled and



- Published under the authority of the Punjab Government. Lahore: (1897-98 2004) *Gazetteer of the Peshawar District*: 43 published by Niaz Ahmad Sange Meel Publication Lahore.
- Amin, Willett, Hancock. 2007. *Journey through Pakistan*. Karachi: Liberty Books (PVT) Ltd, 3 Rafiq Plaza, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Opp. Naval Fleet Club. MR Kayani road Sadar, Karachi 74400 Pakistanpg.53.
- Dani, A. H. 1964. *Ancient Pakistan, Journal of Department of Archeology*. Peshawar: University of Peshawar Volume 1. Accessed November.16, 2016.
- Hadjichristou, Yiorgos. 2012. *Rediscovery of the Courtyard, as a Major Intangible Cultural Heritage*. International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era 1, no. Supplement 1: 361-366.
- Hosagrahar, Jyoti. 2001. *Mansions to Margins: Modernity and the Domestic Landscapes of Historic Delhi, 1847-1910*. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 1
- Marie Deneck, Margaret. 1967. *Making" in Architecture and Sustainability: Critical Perspectives for Integrated Design*. London: The Hamlyn Publishing group Limited. Middlesex, England. Martin." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 17 (1860): 106-137.
- Norwich. 2009. *Merchants' Houses, c. 1400–1660*. "World Archaeology 41, no. 3 (2009): 471-488. org/Hanifi/Orientalist." *Journal of Asian History* 28, no. 2 (1994): 124-135.
- Palsetia, Jesse S. 2005. *Merchant charity and public identity formation in colonial India: The case of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy*. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2005): 197-217.
- Patterson, Steven. 2006. *Postcards from the Raj*. *Journal. Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 02 (2006), 142-158.
- John Marshall. 1973. *Buddhist Art of Gandhara*. Karachi: *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 23, no. 2 (1957): 70-75
- Karan, Pradyumna Prasad. 2005. *The pattern of Indian towns: a study in urban morphology*. America: *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 23, no. 2 (1957): 70-75.

Keene, Derek. 2005. *Cities and Empires*. *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 32 No. 1, November (2005) 821.

Khan, Samra M. 2010. Mechanisms for Natural Ventilation in the Sustainable Architecture of Sethi Havelis, Peshawar, Pakistan," *Journal of Research in Architecture and Planning*, 9, (2010): 38-49.

Khan, Samra, M. 2010. "Mechanisms for Natural Ventilation in the Sustainable Architecture of Sethi Havelis. Peshawar, Pakistan," Pakistan. *Journal of Research in Architecture and Planning*, 9, (2010):

Mckean, John, Sir Banister Flecher. 2006. "Pillar to Post-Colonial Readings". Pakistan: *The Journal of Architecture* 11, no. 2. 2006: 187-204.

Wilson, H. H. 1860. *Art. IV.—Summary Review of the Travels of Hiouen Thsang*, from the Translation of the Si-yu-ki by M. Julien, and the Mémoire Analytique of M. Vivien de St. Martin." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 17 (1860): 106-137

#### **Internet Sources:**

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. 1987. *The Islamic city—Historic myth, Islamic essence, and contemporary relevance*. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 02 (1987): 155-176: Accessed January 14 2015.

<http://www.urbanlab.org/articles/Abu-Lughod%20the%20islamic%20city%20myth.pdf>

Ahmad, Imtiaz. 2016. Raj Kapoor's haveli in Pakistan's Peshawar is facing demolition Imtiaz Ahmed, *Hindustan Times*, Islamabad Updated: Jan 16, 2016 14:01 IST). April 25 2016

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/raj-kapoor-s-haveli-in-pakistan-s-peshawar-is-facing-demolition/story-R1n1YZO2XFNg6aALUEgX8L.html>.

Bell, Gertrude. 2014. *Gertrude Bell Archives*, accessed October 23, 2014. <http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/>

Bernier, Francois. 1916. *Travels in the Mogul Empire, AD 1656-1668*. London: Accessed April 12 2014,

[http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd\\_6093710\\_000/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd_6093710_000/)

Carey & A. Hart, 1835. *Travels into Bokhara*. Accessed October 11 2013,

<https://archive.org/details/travelsintobokha03burn>

Cunningham, Arch. 2014. *Cunningham Achieves*. Rep, Vol ii p 15 (Financial Express. July 13, 2014).

Archived from the original on July 14, 2014. Accessed July 14, 2014.

[https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GGRV\\_enPK753PK753&sxsrf=ACYBGNT0xA-](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GGRV_enPK753PK753&sxsrf=ACYBGNT0xA-)

Gaborieau, Marc. 2008. *Indian Cities, in the City in the Islamic World*. America: vol. 94/1 & 94/2,

editors formation on a colonial frontier." Accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Grabar, Oleg. 1983. *Reflections on the study of Islamic Art*. "Muqarnas. I: Islamic Art and

Architecture (1983): 1-14. Accessed November 22, 2016,

[http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document\\_id=3881](http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document_id=3881)

Hanifi, Shah Mahmood. 2008. *Mutual Evasion between Afghanistan and the Global Marketplace*.

Accessed March 1, 2016. <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/hanifi/>.

Hans Loeschner. 2012. *The stupa of the Kushan Emperor Kanishka the Great, with comments on the Azes*

*Era and Kushan chronology*. Sino-Platonic Papers, 227 accessed November 20, 2015.

[http://www.sino-platonic.org/completespp227\\_kanishka\\_stupa\\_casket.pdf](http://www.sino-platonic.org/completespp227_kanishka_stupa_casket.pdf)

Heidari, Shahin. 2006. *New Life – Old Structure*. "Network for Comfort and Energy Use in Buildings.

Windsor: U.K. 27th-30th April 2006. Accessed March 13 2009,

<http://nceub.org.uk/dokuwiki/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=nceub:uploads:members:w2006:session>

3:w2006\_heidari.pdf

Irfan, Muhammad, Syed , Khan, Masood, Mahmood, Zaigham, Khan, Sohail , G. M. Baloch. 1991.

*Choon Mandi Haveli Conservation*. Haveli Dhyhan Singh. Lahore, Pakistan: Pakistan Environmental

Planning and Architectural Consultants Ltd, 1991. Accessed on 15 Nov 2017.

<https://architexturez.net/doc/az-cf-166701-4>

Khan, Nisar. 2011. *Hasht-Bihisht Metaphor of Metaphysical Manifestation in Architecture & Urban Design of Islamic realm*. Accessed 14 March 2017, <http://www.academia.edu/12617353/Hasht>

Lari, Yasmeen. 29 Mar 2012 *Sethi House Progress*. Accessed 25 December 2017

<http://www.heritagefoundationpak.org/file/15024/sethi-haveli-part-I>

Samizay, Rafi. 1990. *Order and Randomness in Patterns of Islamic Architecture and Urbanism*. In Proceedings of the International Conference on Culture, Space and History. (1990), accessed January 14 2015, [http://iaps.architexturez.net/system/files/pdf/iaps\\_10\\_1990\\_1\\_128.content.pdf](http://iaps.architexturez.net/system/files/pdf/iaps_10_1990_1_128.content.pdf)

Thomas Lowell. 1924. *Into Forbidden Afghanistan*. September I, 1924. Accessed on February 10, 2016.

<http://buickclub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Lowell-Thomas-in-Afghanistan.pdf>

Tillotson, Sarah. 1998. *Indian mansions: A social history of the Haveli*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 1998. Accessed on 12 December 2018.

[https://www.amazon.in/Indian-Mansions-Social-History Haveli/dp/8125013857](https://www.amazon.in/Indian-Mansions-Social-History-Haveli/dp/8125013857)

### **Acknowledgements:**

Rabia Sethi resident of Kucha Sethian from family of Haji Gull and Principal in a local College.

Saleem Sethi immediate family member of Sethis and a Civil Servant in Islamabad.

Moena Sethi one of the sisters who lived in Sethi House.

Ahmad Faraz, A student of Archaeology and in charge Sethi Haveli and also works at Gor Gathri Peshawaer.

Nawaz an M. Phil Researcher and works in Sethi Haveli.

Mansoor Ahmad Toofi Cousin of famous actor Shah Rukh Khan.