



# The Philosophy of Chaharbagh Design in Tabriz Carpets

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## Introduction

Among the masterpieces of Safavid-era Azerbaijani (Persian) carpet art, the Chaharbagh (four gardens) or garden carpets stand out not only for their beauty but also for their deep philosophical and cultural meaning. Woven by Tabriz masters, these carpets were inspired by palace garden architecture and embodied the essence of the universe and life through rich symbolic imagery.



## Palace Architecture and Carpet Design

The plan of 17th-century Safavid palaces was carefully constructed: each side received sunlight from a different angle, and the shah and his family would sit in the section most suitable for the season. At the heart of this design were central water channels and the concept of a garden divided into four equal sections. Tabriz weavers translated this concept into miniature form on carpets, thus bringing the palace gardens into the home.



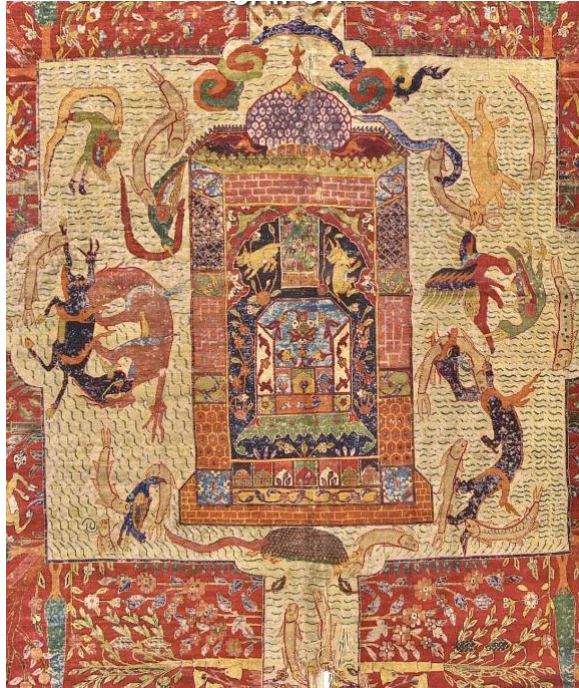
## Symbols of Water and Life

The most distinctive feature of Chaharbagh carpets is the presence of central water channels and pools.

- Water – symbol of life and divine purification,
- Fish – symbol of abundance, flow, and happiness,
- Birds – freedom, spiritual elevation, and sometimes seen as divine messengers.

These elements brought both the imagery of paradise gardens and the lively spirit of palace culture into the carpet.





### Mythological and Protective Symbols

Tabriz weavers incorporated not only nature but also mythology into these carpets.

- Dragon – power, protection, and warding off calamities,
- Phoenix – renewal and immortality,
- Animal figures – symbols of protection, abundance, and vitality.

These motifs, combined with greenery and water, endowed the carpets with both aesthetic beauty and spiritual energy.



## Depiction of Nature and Seasons

Chaharbagh carpets often depict a variety of trees and flowers. These motifs represent:

- The cycle of seasons,
- The constant renewal of nature,
- The stages of human life.

The division of the carpet into four sections further strengthened this symbolism: each quarter represented a season, a garden, and a story.

## Conclusion

The garden carpets woven by 17th-century Tabriz masters were not mere decorative objects – they embodied the philosophical world of Safavid palaces. Fish, dragons, birds, trees, and flowing waters combined to create a vision of cosmic harmony. For this reason, Chaharbagh carpets remain among the most valuable treasures of humanity, both artistically and philosophically.



