

Diwan-i-Agra

The Face of Taj

I.

Now I see thy face, O Commander of the Faithful—
Not that one inherited from ancestors and parents
Which man shares in common with all the animal brood,
But that face of which it has been said:
“God created man in His own Image and Likeness.”
It was not a negative prohibition to foreswear all copying
In painting, in sculpture and in artistic manner,
For the delineations of the artists are but maps,
At most indicators of what really lies behind.
And what is the reality behind the living form?
Can the camera capture the heart of personality?
Or a fleeting moment crystallize the inner essence?
The outer surface of the soul becomes an idol
When copied and then set before an admiring world;
The inner person has a million faces,
The eyes more lights than the dome of the heavens—
Turn from idolatry to true belief and know
That the face of the Prophet is ever hidden, ever revealed.
God Is Beauty. Ya Jamil!

II.

Now I see thy mind, wielder of the pen of the scriptures,
With all its qualities and potentialities
Which made possible the revelation of Akhlak-i-Allah:
The qualities of majesty, the qualities of beauty
And above all, the qualities of perfection.
Who else among the children of Adam has so manifested them?
And where else among the artists of Adam have they been portrayed?
The line, the curve, the plane, the geometric elements,
The marble, the stone, the inlays and the jewels,
The use of the Holy Book for cursive inscriptions
Each in its way, its sway, its determinations
The derivations of the Sifat-i-Allah.
The living love and the endless aspirations of man
Are here moulded into the architecture
So non-readers of the wonders of revelation
Come in multitudes; and non-Muslims, against their will,
Are compelled to cognize the spirit of the Prophet.

III.

Now I see thy heart, o Rassoul-Lillah,
Whose love for God had reached the gates of impenetrability,
Whose love for a woman came to fruition in his marriage,
Whose relations with the wise Khadija remain an ideal.

Who was this Shah Jehan but a keeper of the heritage?
And this Mumtaz Begum but a continuation of the faith?
Look, O Syeds, to your honorable ancestry;
Look at your own descent through a glorious woman,
See in this the descent of all men through women
And also in this the glorification of Islam.
What have you lust-swathed orthodox to say to this?
Has Allah excluded half of humanity from His worship?
Constancy in love as constancy in worship
Was the Sunnat of the Prophet whose name you keep,
But who has set the custom of continuous divorce,
One after another after another after another,
And held such is the proper method within Islam?
Unbelievers come in multitudes to the Taj,
While so-called believers in other Qur'anic lands
Go in multitudes to the divorce courts
Or divorce their women by a few spoken words.
When will you, Mullahs, follow the ways of the Prophet
And cease to justify the misdoings of the orthodox
In the manners in which they have belittled women?
Not Allah, not the Prophet, not Ali the Just
And certainly not the great rulers of the Moguls
Who gave us this noble beauty to our delight,
To praise Allah without cession, to repeat His Name.

Get your souls out of purdah, you so-called believers,
Take the veils from your hearts and glorify the Glorifiable
And cease to place your customs over Truth.
This is Islam: utter surrender of your self;
This is Islam: endless glory of the One.

The Tomb of Akbar

His bones lay buried here—his work goes on,
After many centuries it goes on.
Now peoples of many languages consort together,
Now peoples of many faiths establish nations,
Now unity in integration has overcome uniformity,
Now, after many years, his ideals are realized.
Born out of time, even perhaps, born out of place,
He understood the meaning of Allah,
He understood the relation of humanity to God,
He did not teach, he did not preach, he exemplified;
The longings of his heart became the laws of his nation,
Little understood then, and much abused.
But there is a Pan-Islam over narrow limits
Which sees the many, many, many ways to God
Without equalizing them or placing them side by side,
Rather over one another, with unity at the crest.

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Allaho Akbar! God is the might and strength of this universe.
Allaho Akbar! Greater than armies, greater than weapons, greater than propaganda.
Allaho Akbar! Without Him one cannot breathe and much less live.
Why then the fear? the panics? this trembling at the efforts of rulers of nations?
They are but dust and soon this will be manifest.
Man was born but to die yet to realize the Truth:
God was not born, God does not die, God is ever the True.

The Pearl Mosque

Thousands have come to pray, daily, daily, daily, daily, daily;
Multitudes have come to pray in unison on Friday afternoons;
The aspirations of the devotees over the course of centuries
Remains in the purified atmosphere over the place.
Take off your shoes, and with that your materiality!
Take off your shoes, and discard the adumbrations of the nufs!
Take off your shoes, and open the space around your heart,
So the floodgates of the blessings of millions of prayers
May pour upon your inner being and you thus be healed.
A single prayer, a single intonation of "Allaho Akbar"
And all the prayers and repetitions of the Glory of God
Come to an integrative unity in the space above,
And in the space above that into the worlds unseen,
And beyond the worlds unseen to the Arsh-throne of His Being.
A stranger may walk, unable to speak to men in tongues,
He will not continue a stranger whose heart is open to God—
Subhan Allah! Subhan Allah! Subhan Allah!