

Roop Behroop

A Book by by Kausar Bashir Ahmed

Reviewed by DAZ, 1st March 2011, Karachi

Many years ago, one evening in a friendly family meeting Kausar Bashir casually presented me a small booklet with a title of 'Roop Behroop'. He suggested quite humbly that I go through some of his sketches and poems in that booklet. It was a photocopy of an intended future publication but this edition was for close circle of friends. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the 'Artist' and the 'Poet' within the towering personality of KBA that I had known for years.

Command of the 'word' and command of the 'line' are normally two separate domains and it is almost impossible to excel in both at the same time. It is an extremely rare quality which only exceptional people can possess. One is instantly reminded of famous names such as William Blake and Khalil Gibran who were visionary poets and artists as well. It seems that God was also generous with KBA and endowed him with these rare talents.

It is sad that KBA did not further the 'poet' side of his personality nor did he nurture the artist within him. The fact of the matter is that he got totally consumed by his vocation of 'Architecture' and its teaching, for which it is known that he devoted his entire life.

Nonetheless, the booklet is a lovable document which contains some of his original poetic indulgences, illustrations, renditions besides some translations of his favorite poetic associations. It quite explicitly demonstrates the philosophical depth of KBA. This reminds us of Vitruvius, the great historian of Architecture. Vitruvius prescribed certain pre-requisites for an architect besides the art of building buildings. It was Law and even clock making, among other subjects. But perhaps the essence of his teachings was that the architect is not just a professional who plans and erects buildings but a philosopher with a vision, a sociologist, an economist, a political genius and a reformer who directs future generations. Art and Poetry are but an integral part of such visionaries.

The title illustration of the book begins with a sensual depiction of a flower, the petals of which are beautiful lips, at places these petal lips are cruising the atmosphere as if pollinating love and Melancholy. The complexity, depth and perspective in the illustrations are natural and most profound and it shows that the architect is at the steering wheels. The mastery of the Calligraphic tool leads us in circles and other geometric forms and directions as if words have undertaken a journey into a dream. This dream has to be seen to be enjoyed. I was delighted by this dream.