

DOORS OPEN

Doors open. Also, many windows. Light comes. We see the place: many pathways become visible. You are made to feel that there is no hurry. We have time to linger on this space created by art. It is luminous; you see more. It is a space for reflection ; you think more intensely. You are surrounded by a glowing and reflective warmth. It is not attempting to reveal to you and give you tidings about the world. Instead, it is unravelling to you, in silence and depth, your own inscapes where your being touches essence, shorn of all trappings of incidence, time and history. Away from ruptures and disjunctions, in harmony but passionate orchestration, in a quiet, unobtrusive continuum of pure existence. Colours in fury, shapes in carefully structured locations vibrate towards a still centre, the locus of energy and silence, the radiating point of purity. We have arrived at the painterly space of Sayed Haider Raza. It is a space bound by the limits of canvasses and yet it seems beyond all bounds. It is a space which liberates you for the time being. It makes you recall and resonate with memories, personal, social and artistic. It is an invocation not to join in some chorus, but to immerse yourself in your own personal prayer, inaudible to others but clearly heard deep down in your own shrine of self.

At this advanced stage of his artistic career , Raza seems to be revisiting his earlier phases in a deeply retrospective mood on the one hand and, on the other, exploring the ultimate peace and the still latent energy, making them visually manifest in endearing ways. Recurrence, with many subtle differences, is somewhat akin to the unfolding of a Raga. You traverse a lot and yet keep on coming back to the same point. In your beginning is your end. While one could place the works in both art-historical and personal-historical contexts, Raza's work has always addressed time in its aspect of eternity, rather than of history. He has been inscribing his works invariably with lines of poetry, sagacious utterances, such as 'Tatvamasi', 'Appa Deepo Bhav', which can be traced to their historicity Vedic, Post-Vedic, Buddhist, medieval or modern. But in Raza's works they are not so much imprints of history as inscriptions of eternity: time being consecrated by the timeless.

In a manner of speaking, in Raza's art, time begins at the beginning. He is the poet of origins. In historically crowded and confusing times such as ours, he has the courage and the confidence of making us see again such simple-looking , yet enormously complex ideas as 'Deep', 'Darshan', 'Bhoomi', 'Shanti', 'Kundalini', 'Swapna', ' Ankuran' etc. His art takes us back, as it were, to our original home. All impediments wither away and we are face to face with that original reality which art alone can recreate for us.

5 January 2005

Ashok Vajpeyi