

Gardens of the Vicegerent

Gardens have played an important role in the philosophical thought, literary expression, artistic structure and architectural landscape of Muslim cultures. The phenomenon is rooted in the Islamic view of man's origins and his destination, and not in his passion to build "paradise" on earth, proposes **Gulzar Haider**.

GOD created man and gifted him with the knowledge of "names", perhaps, of primal entities and their categories. So significant was this attribute of man that it distinguished him from angels and all other creations. It was indeed this "knowledge" that became an argument for his being worthy of the station of "God's Vicegerency".

For this most distinguished among His creations (*Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat*), God chose as dwelling the primordial Garden. An abode with provisions so bountiful that he would know no hunger, no nakedness, nor suffer from the thirst, nor the scorching sun (Qur'an 20: 117-119). For this idyllic existence, free of the trials and tribulations of body, the Creator put but one condition on its noble inhabitants: obedience to a single, apparently simple command. A particular "Tree" was not to be approached. And to make the transaction absolutely clear, the consequences of disobedience were also stated: "Lest you run into harm and transgression" (7:19). The enemy, the scheming antagonist of the Straight Path, the seductively misleading *Iblees* (Diabolis, Satan) was also identified (20: 117). But man had been created with potential failings of forgetfulness and weakness of resolve (20: 115). He must have also had a primal anxiety about mortality because it is precisely this emotion that his tempter exploited. By labelling the forbidden "Tree" as the antidote for physical decay and the prescription for eternity, he brought man to his first encounter with forgetfulness, temptation and weakness. Man thus broke his covenant with his Creator and committed the first act of disobedience. The result was man's first cognisance of his "nakedness". The weakness that was dormant and hidden became manifest. But this dweller of the Garden, this "Vicegerent - designate" had three very special attributes that distinguished him from all

the creation. Firstly, he had the innate wisdom to cover the nakedness once he recognised it. For that, he sewed the "leaves from the Garden". Secondly, he had the purity of conscience to realise his mistake and confess it without deceit, and thirdly, he knew his God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Only and the Ultimate Protector. So he turned to Him in abject sincerity and supplicated thus:

"O, Our Lord! We have indeed committed a tyranny against our own selves.

*And if You forgive us not,
And bestow not upon us Your mercy,
We shall certainly be among the ones in Loss."* (7: 23)

The forgiveness was granted but this man could not be allowed to be in the Garden anymore. Earth was to become his dwelling for a determined duration. The Earthly Sojourn had begun. Here the trials were many, and the anxieties of temporality, mortality and decay were real. Bounties were plentiful but man had to toil for them. While the primal nature of man remained untainted, he was now prone to the additional challenges of enmity, doubt, greed and arrogance. His arch-enemy, the one who deceived him into the first disobedience and caused his departure from the Garden had followed him to earth. And here on earth, his temptations were wrapped up in manifold garbs and he wore the most deceptive masks.

But man was neither banished nor abandoned. How could the Vicegerent of God be left helpless by God. He had the special Grace of Divine Guidance that came through human prophets, messengers and inspired leaders who were the living testimony to man's potentiality and purpose on earth. Earthly life was now the arena of action preparatory to the final return before the Ultimate Judge. And

if the belief was firm, if the guidance was accepted and followed with perseverance, if the gifts of intelligence were realised with creativity and without arrogance, if the duties of trusteeship were sincerely fulfilled and if the justice was jealously guarded against the tyranny, then life was a directed journey on the Path of Righteousness, the *Shari'a. Taqwa*, that is piety and meticulous obedience with responsibility, was to be man's figurative cover against the "nakedness" and shield against the machinations of his enemy. The Way of Islam, that is the responsibility towards the Divine Purpose of creation, fulfillment of rights of man uncompromised obedience to God based in faith rather than fear. These conditions and covenants and their many expressions in the rich spectrum of *Shari'a* became conditions for the "Supreme Achievement" of the Gardens of Eternity (61: 12). And the ultimate vision of every believer became that he will, perhaps, be worthy of the Invitation:

*"O, the soul in complete fulfillment,
Return, you to your Lord.
Well-pleased are you
And you are well-pleasing to Him.
Enter! O, you, among my devotees.
Yes! enter you, My Garden."* (89: 27-30)

What more can be said about the primacy of this Garden! It was the first abode. It is engraved in the collective memory of man. It, in fact, is the original memory. It is also the ultimate hope, the highest reward. Separation from it marked the beginning of man's trials on earth. Return to it will be the wedding night of existence. Garden is, thus, the significant reference in the flow of creation. It is a universal archetype and quite independent of time, place or culture, man has sought to express it through literature, art, and architecture.

Qur'an is the bedrock of Islamic epistemology. For Muslims, it is the unadulterated "Word of God". This Book of Guidance and Law, is also the Light that dispells the darkness, Arbiter that differentiates the right from the wrong, and the Source that rewards the sincere seeker with images, realisations and knowledge not available from either experience or experiment. Though its instructions are unambiguous and its admonitions succinct, it adopts symbolic and metaphoric devices when it speaks of "realities beyond". One of its most oft-repeated metaphors is that of the Garden, a place in the Presence of

GARDENS

God (50: 35). It is a place of pious companions who exchange peaceful salutations and indulge in no vain talk. A place where creation blossoms in a magnificence unimagined on earth, where beauty is untarnished, where there is cool shade and streams of pure water; where there is neither sorrow, nor weariness, nor pain, nor illness. This is the Garden with springs, fruits, carpets, thrones, goblets of gold, and chaste companions. Nothing is frivolous, nor anything in bad taste. This is the place of highest achievement where wish and reality are indistinguishable. This is the Garden where the primal thirsts for divinity, eternity, love and beauty are quenched. This Garden is the metaphoric "Assembly of Truth and the Presence of Sovereign Omnipotent" (54: 55). And perhaps the most awe-inspiring testimonial is the declaration from God, "This, My Garden!" (89: 30).

There are about one hundred and twenty references to the Garden in the Qur'an. No one who approaches this Book can remain unaffected by the pervasive presence of this blissful place. The Garden, thus, becomes the genius loci of Islam's view of a desired place; and, in fact, the essence of the Qur'anic images of architecture. It is little wonder then, that the literary, artistic and architectural expression of the Islamic cultures finds the Garden to be a potent allegorical, metaphoric and analogous device in aiming for the ideal states of being. The very ethics as well as the aesthetics of Muslim societies, especially in the realm of man's relationship to landscape and his place in nature have been affected by this phenomenon. The Muslim, of course, is forever cautious that his creative impulses do not become subservient to his ego and lead him to the arrogant claim that he can make God's Garden on earth. He is sternly reminded of how God punished those who built "the city of Eram with lofty pillars" and were arrogant enough to consider it to be the paradise beyond comparison in all existence (89: 6-8). Muslims know too well the legends and parables of those who committed the ultimate transgression, that of crowning themselves as the "Creators and Absolute Masters". So it would be rather naive, if not completely unfair, to propose that the motivation underlying the profusion of gardens in the Muslim world is that the "fallen man", having been "exiled" from the Heavenly Paradise and now spurred by the "sensual descriptions of Paradise in



Paradise lost: An Islamic garden design on a carpet from northwestern Iran, circa 1700

the Qur'an", has been replicating paradises on earth in a literal sense. Such a view reduces the believer to the pathetic level of a tragic exile who deludes himself to substitute make-believe transient worlds for the Gardens of Eternity only metaphorically hinted at. If such has been the

motivation of some garden-builders then it is incompatible with Islam's view of earthly sojourn as a preparatory place for the life and reality beyond.

For Islam, man is neither a fallen angel nor a sinner exiled in shame to a life of suffering and pain on this earth.

He was sent with a challenge and he made a covenant to receive and follow the Guidance. His "original memory" of the Garden lends impetus to his vision to be worthy of it again. He believes that the Eternal Garden is promised to the *Muttaqeen*, the pious, the ones mindful of their duties towards fellow man and nature. So as the Prophet said his attitude towards earthly existence is as "the sprouting-bed for the hereafter". He has no delusions about finding or creating the Heavenly Garden on earth. He, instead, is in constant preparation. But as in all passionate pursuits what is sought projects on the life of the seeker. The preferences of the beloved, ever so silently, start appearing in the choices of the lover. It is in this sense that the believer imagines gardens in and around him. So creatively, he seeks to "stage" the drama of being in that Garden. He writes, sings, paints, plants and nourishes the gardens. He is the "gardener" and God, the Blossomer, the Life-giver. His creativity is the gift from the Creator, how could it be an affront to Him? He is the extension of "God's Hand" and as such he is the embellisher of God's creation. This believer-gardner is the vicegerent and in that sense he may assume the burdensome trust and transform virgin nature, but only for the purpose of making His Way clearer, more beautiful and inviting. It is precisely to clarify this contribution of man that the poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal sets this "Dialogue Between God and Man":

God Addressing Man

I created the world one, with mere water and earth
 You carved it into an Iran, a Tatar and a Zeng
 To dust I endowed pure iron
 You converted it to swords and arrows and guns
 Created you the hatchet, cutting down the garden
 Created you the cage, imprisoning the song bird.

Man Explaining himself to God

You Created the night, to that I brought the lamp
 You Created dust, of that I made a bowl
 The barren land, the harsh mountain, the inhospitable expanse,
 Converted I to gardens, rose beds and pleasing vistas
 I, the one who makes mirror from your stone

I, the one who extracts cure from your poison.

This man of Iqbalian thought is the vitalistic, creative, actuated self. He is the Muslim-believer, the *Momin*. He is neither the despondent victim of fate nor a rebel against an enigmatic destiny. He is the God-directed lover willingly in servitude of his Beloved; he is the trustee and has been given vicegerency over the vast natural domain; his individuality is meaningful only in the context of the community, his actions are outward oriented and he gives generously from all his capabilities and possessions. Only his contemplation is inward directed. This is the proverbial Muslim, the planter and waterer of gardens so essential for the beauty and vitality of earthly existence.

The expressive range of garden in Muslim cultures is wide indeed. It has been at its best when it came from reflections of the poet-philosopher, pen of the calligrapher and the fine brush and the brilliant palette of the miniature artist. Here there were few limits to the imagination and the rhymed gardens, blossoming with metaphors and analogies, are simultaneously the frame and the picture, the veil and the veiled, the conjecture and its refutation. These gardens point out the higher permanence in what appears to be seasonal, purpose in what appears to be casual and deeper wisdom in what might be taken as a mere sensual beauty. These gardens are the visionary recitals in praise of the Unseen. As J S Meisami has pointed out, these literary gardens cannot be considered as "exercises in entertainment, mystical escapism, or prince-pleasing flattery. They are rather quests for knowledge arising from the belief that man, in coming to know the world... comes to know himself as well.... (these are) quests that attempt to reveal the infinite variety and harmonious order of the universe." At the risk of pretensions to encapsulate an "ocean into a beggar's bowl" let me propose that the literary tradition in Islamic cultures has employed nature and garden in four ways:

1. Nature is treated as "God's rhetoric", and garden, therefore, becomes a text full of signs (*Ayat*) leading to cognisance (*Irfan*) of the Garden. In this sense the poetic images of garden become an instrument of elaboration and an aesthetic device to extend the message of the Qur'an: "Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the

earth; in the alternation of the night and the day;... in the rain that He sends down from the skies and the life that He gives thus to an earth that is dead;... in the change of the winds, and the subservient clouds that trail them...; Here indeed are signs for a people that are wise" (2: 164). Saadi of Shiraz, the 12th century poet-sage, speaks thus:

"In the eyes of the wise man, each leaf of the green tree is the Book of the Creator's wisdom."

And Hafez, also from the same "Garden City" of Shiraz, almost two centuries later, seems to have perfected Saadi's message:

"In the meadow, every petal is the book of a different state of being. What a pity if you remain ignorant of them all!"

The garden of Hafez, a place for the eternal dialogue of the "nightingale" and the "rose", metaphors of lover and the beloved, is ultimately a catalyst for profound spiritual insights. He is sceptical of "books of the schoolmen", and the "preacher's" practice of his trade of words, which to him are distortions of God's rhetoric. Instead, he points to his verse as "the sweetest fruits of this garden", this Book of Nature.

2. The literary garden also became the medium for expressing the "inexpressible". The spiritual realm, intensely felt but invisible and indescribable, left in man the thirst for expression. The Qur'an pointed a way through its own use of parables most of which used phenomena of nature. For example, the innate power of the Revelation, that is felt in its consequences on the canvass of history and is otherwise not visible in any concrete phenomenon, has been expressed as: "Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, verily you would have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for the fear of Allāh. Such are the parables which We propound to mankind, that they may reflect" (59: 21). There are numerous parables in Qur'an, the most striking in the context of present discussion being those of the "Light in the Niche" (24: 35-45) and the "Garden with Four Rivers" (47: 15).

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi epitomises the thirst of a loving and seeking heart to give expression to his love for the Hidden Beloved. To him "the forms of the creation are veils interposed between human perception and the Divine that are essential to the

apprehension of the Unseen." And he elaborates this in a way that reveals his belief in the inevitability of metaphoric expression: "For if God's beauty should display itself without a veil, we would not have the power to endure and would not enjoy it... You see yonder sun, how in its light we walk and see and distinguish good from bad and are warmed. The trees and orchards become fruitful, and in the heat of it their fruits, unripe and sour and bitter, become mature and sweet... If yonder sun, which through intermediaries bestows so many benefits, were to come nearer it would bestow no benefit whatsoever; on the contrary, the whole world and every creature would be burnt up and destroyed. When God most High makes revelations through a veil to the mountain, it too becomes fully arrayed in trees and flowers and verdure. When, however, He makes a revelation without a veil, He overthrows the mountain and breaks it into atoms."

And thus Rumi employs the metaphors of sun, light, trees, orchards, fruits, mountains and finally connects his discourse by borrowing from the "Parable of the Mountain" from the Qur'an. To this man, endearingly known to the humblest of people and greatest of scholars alike as "Mevlana" (our helper, our guide), garden is the earthly manifestation of the "Unseen Universal Reality" and all the denizens of the garden are participants in the *Tasbih*, the praise and adoration of God. Rumi asserts that it is "in the phenomenon of Spring that the glory of God appears", because through it shines the grace of creation in nature and the rebirth of soul in man. His poetry is so rich in its use of symbols and allegorical structure that it is neither fair nor possible in our present writing to get into a detailed analysis. However, this narrative will be deficient without a visit to one of his gardens:

*"Joyous spring has arrived, the Beloved Messenger has come,
drunk with love, intoxicated, we cannot be still.*

*My Darling, my eye, my illuminator,
go forth to the garden, leave not the beauties
of the meadow in expectation.*

*Strangers from the Unseen have arrived
in the meadow, go forth,
for it is a rule to "Visit the Newcomer."*

My Darling, the rose has followed you,

*and to greet you the thorn has become
soft of cheek.*

*Lily by the riverbank has become all
tounge in your exposition. Cypress,
listen!*

*The bud was tightly knotted; your
grace has loosened it,
rose, blossoms through your grace
scatters its petals over you.*

*It is the resurrection, perhaps!
The dead of yesteryear, those who
rotted in winter
have raised their head from the earth.*

*The dead seed has found life,
the secret held by earth has been
revealed.*

*The fruit-laden bough rejoices, and the
one that has none is ashamed.*

*Ah, the trees of the spirit will do the
same,
those with excellent branches,
fortunate, will come forth*

*Spring, the emperor, has ordered his
army, well provided
jasmine has seized the shield,
green grass, the Dhu'l-Fiqaar.*

"We will behead the enemy like chives,

*Behold, visible action in the handiwork
of the Creator".*

*Yes! When the Divine help arrives,
Nimrod is brought to destruction by a
gnat.*

In commenting on the above *ghazal* of Rumi, J S Meisami has suggested that it is a "tableaux of ritual actions performed in the garden by its inhabitants: *Shehadah*, bearing witness to the Creator's glory and openness; *Qiyamah*, resurrection, when the souls confess and the true worth of each is revealed; and, *Jihad*, the holy war against unbelief...; though in Rumi's garden, every flower has its function in representing various states and aspects of human life, these functions are subordinated to the central unifying purpose: praise of the Divine".

So pervasive and dominant is this view of nature and garden as the encompassing metaphor of existence and the essential frame through which the inner meaning and outer expression of creation can be approached that a vocabulary of symbols has evolved: water, as rain, a spring or a river is what brings life back to the lifeless

and is thus God's grace (*Rahmah*); rose is the Divine Beloved and especially for Rumi, is associated with the Prophet as the Perfect Man; thorn is the spiritual blindness; there is the "winter of reasoning" symbolising the constraint of earthly existence that awaits the "Divine zephyr" which will melt away all frozenness as spring melts away the ice. That "winter is the season of gathering and summer, the season of spending is resonant with Rumi's favourite saying of the Prophet: "This world is the sprouting-bed of the next." Earth is female with its anticipating womb and seed and the Heaven is male with its water and warmth. Narcissus is the eye and morning breeze is the bearer of the news from afar. The literary garden of the Islamic cultures thus becomes a composition of numerous symbols and metaphors into a larger metaphor: that of this world in anticipation and preparation for the next.

3. Garden has also been recognised as a phenomenon that identifies enigmatic visages of life. Garden poses the questions and for the "seeing and the seeking" there are hints at the answers. Rumi, Shabistari, Hafez and many other poets have asked questions about mortality, love, beauty and "who-ness" of the Divine. Listen to Hafez:

*"When now that the rose upon the
meadow from Nothing into Being
springs*

*When at her feet the humble violet with
her head low in worship clings...*

*Earth rivals the Immortal Garden
during the rose and the lily's reign;*

*But to what avail when the Immortal is
sought for on this earth in vain?"*

And Rumi raising the question of precedence amongst the manifest reality and the inner realisations in his *Mathnawi*:

*"It was a fair orchard, full of trees and
fruit*

*And vines and greenery. A Sufi there
Sat with eyes closed, his head upon his
knee,*

Sunk deep in meditation, mystical.

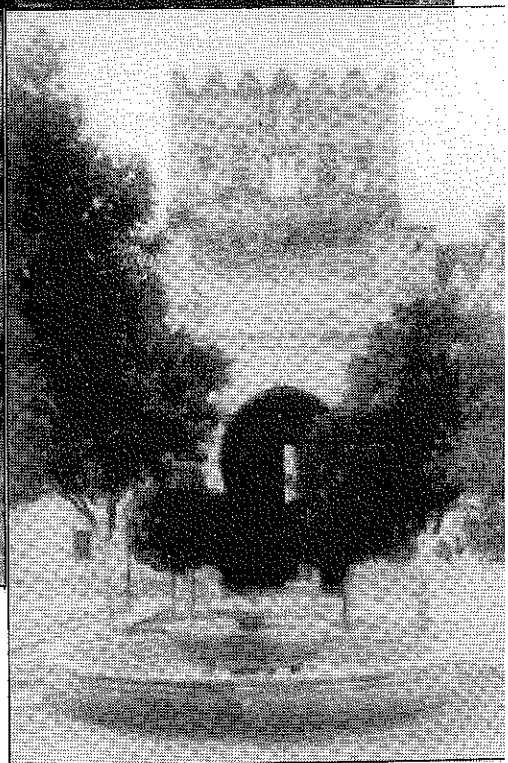
*"Why", asked another, "Do you not
behold*

*These Signs of God the Merciful
displayed*

*Around you, which He bids us contem-
plate?"*

*"The signs," he answered, "I behold
within;*

*Without is naught but symbols of
Signs."*



Fertility and Coolness: A private garden in Mehran, Iran; and the garden of the Great Mosque in Seville (left)

Shabistari in his *Gulshan-i-Raz* (Garden of the Secrets); Suhrawardi in his story of the "Peacock in the King's Garden", Saadi in his *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) and *Bustan* (Orchard) and Iqbal in his *Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadeed* (Renewed Garden of the Secrets) have all raised rhetorical questions ranging from philosophy of existence to individual and social morality and offered poetic answers.

4. The literary garden reached its zenith as it was used in the lyrical epics and legends like Firdausi's

Shahnamah (Book of Kings), Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet) and especially his *Haft Paikar* (Seven Portraits) and Jami's *Haft Aurang* (Seven Thrones). Here the garden was used both as a place to stage an act in the unfolding story as well as a station in the destiny of the main character. Garden, simultaneously as the setting and the symbol, is best exemplified through Nizami's *Haft Paikar*. It is primarily a legend whose subtle message is to educate its protagonist, Bahram Gur in the art and ethics of kingship. The story is bounded between two contex-

tual gardens, first is the artificial winter garden in which the prince celebrates his wedding to the "seven princesses from seven climes"; the last is spring garden where he holds the court after he comes out of his journey as narrated through seven stories under the seven domes. In three of these stories, the first, fourth and the seventh, garden is simultaneously the stage and an important character. The stories are replete with symbols of colour, darkness, light,

trials, spells, desire, seduction, repentance, reward, love, longing, more trials, realisations and finally wisdom. Woven through the tales are the Qur'anic ethical reminders of the consequences of arrogance: Garden of Eram as earthly paradise of vanity and desire; impatience: breaking of covenants in pursuit of desire; and transgression of the law: in clouding distinctions between *Halal* (permitted) and *Haram* (illicit). Nizami's *Haft Paikar* is a grand allegory, a journey of ethical progress which begins with the "winter garden" that is lost to the prince and ends with the "spring garden" of his spiritual rebirth and where he celebrates the initiation of his rule of justice. But perhaps more than anything else, its ultimate value lies in the correspondence it establishes between "man the microcosm and nature, the macrocosm" and the mutual etiquette within the Divine Scheme that transcends and encompasses both. And it is in this sense that a Nizami, a Jami, a Firdawsi, a Hafez, or a Khusrau, lyrical romantics and court flatterers as they might seem to a casual reader or the harsh and shallow orthodox, have helped shape a tradition that invites us to contemplate on the Garden of Being in which we exist. Perchance it may blossom in us. Perchance the microcosm may become worthy of comprehending the macrocosm.

The literary allegorical garden has found its most sympathetic expression through the art of miniature painting. The miniature mediates between the ephemeral world of poetic garden and the sensory and tactile realm of the architectural garden. It is not a mere pictorial illustration because the primary motive is not to retell the story in pictures. One senses that the artist is a poet himself except that his language encompasses colour, form, pattern, trees, flowers, birds, water and a myriad of architectural elements. He composes a narrative in which the rules of optics and Euclidean three-dimensionality do not confine him. He unfolds the spatial world, selects what is significant and arranges it on the two-dimensional surface of the paper. He uses multiple vantage points in a manner that parts of his world are looked upon from the top, part from the front and part from within. Though his painted world is luminous, there are no shades and shadows. In the flatness of his picture there is in fact a hyperdimensional world. What is significant gets the central stage or is framed in a befitting architectural setting. The secondary is used only to

enhance that which is primary. And here again nature is used as grand setting and garden is employed as a stage though it never becomes an end in itself. Poetry is selectively brought in but the boundary between the calligraphed "word" and the painted "form" is kept crisp and clear. In some cases the calligraphed poetry acts as a proscenium or as a threshold and it shares its boundaries with the frame of the miniature. In most miniatures it appears as opaque tablets suspended on a transparent plane through which one observes the "world". The presence of the words in such a supportive but detached manner strongly establishes that what we see is not a "scenery". Miniature painting is thus coexistent with poetry on one hand and the architectural garden on the other. But being closer to poetry it is more successful as a medium for the spiritual and philosophical message through analogical devices drawn from nature, life experiences and emotions.

Islamic cultures that left a legacy of literary and painted gardens also produced a most evocative array of garden carpets. The making of a carpet is comparable to writing a poem and painting a miniature. The carpet, its hidden structure, its manifest natural and geometric order, its flowers and its trees abstracted to varying degrees and composed into an infinite arabesque, its central motif, its outward bound four streams, its birds, gazelles and other creatures, all contained within a border that is as essential to the carpet as walls are to a room. A carpet is simultaneously an object of the art of weaving and a place. Imagine spreading a carpet in an undifferentiated expanse. Suddenly one has claimed an area, established a boundary, set an orientation and defined a centre. This is an act of "placing", a gesture without which there is no architecture. A place of prayer is established on this earth every time a believer orients his prayer rug to the *Qibla*. And the spring blossoms forth in full glory and even the birds become alive and the streams start running as a garden carpet is spread out.

Primal to man's nature is the longing for his original-blissful abode. To Muslims it has been a matter of belief that the Way, followed with piety and perseverance, will make them worthy of the Garden again. Their philosophers and poets have extended the Qur'anic parables and metaphors of the Garden to almost an epistemological vehicle for explaining the scheme

and creation. Their cultures have produced a body of literature where "world-garden" is the "sprouting bed" for the Garden Hereafter and a stage where the drama of ethical dialectic of good and evil is played through the legends of love, beauty, kingdom and conquest. Their miniaturists have lovingly composed the world of rose and the nightingale, of jasmine and the pomegranate. And their caring hands have knotted countless threads of wool and silk to create gardens to pray on or to rejoice the lawful bounties.

The longing could be carried in the heart, the poem could be recited, the book could be carried and the carpet could journey. But man ultimately establishes his presence by engaging the phenomena of nature and materiality, of climate and seasons, of growth and decay, of survival and struggle and ultimately of life and death. And all this must happen within his higher pursuits of love, beauty and divinity. It is little wonder then that the cultures that nourished an Ibn Arabi, a Ghazali, a Rumi, a Jami, a Nizami, a Hafez and a Khusrau also left us a legacy of architectural gardens that finds no parallel in history. The cities of Cordova, Granada, Fez, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kashan, Samarqand, Herat, Kabul, Lahore, Agra, Delhi..., all became cities of gardens. Even today one hears of the fifteenth century gardens of Samarqand with names like *Naqsh-i-Jehan* (Image of the World), *Bihisht* (Paradise), *Dlikusha* (Opener of the Heart). Even today the garden of Babur that he named: *Bagh-i-Wafa* (Garden of Fidelity) survives through a miniature that appears in lectures and books on gardens all over the world. And even today a *Generaliffe*, a *Bagh-i-Fin* and a *Shalimar* survive if only to remind us that the passion of Jelaluddin Rumi lives through every spring that comes to these gardens.

In the legacy of Islamic garden, a philosophical metaphor or an architectural fact, are hints towards an environmental ethic for our generation and those of the future. Our task is that of a gardener who prepares for the spring with absolute certainty that it will break through but with full realisation that its beauty depends on his creative imagination and its fruits on his total commitment, intelligent struggle and nourishing care. Only through such gardening may we regain our vicegerency. Only then may the dishevelled ruins of our Muslim present blossom into an Islamic garden of our future. ■