

Pensive Moments At Shalimar Bagh

Have you been to Shalimar Bagh
And sighed for the company of someone you love?

Almost 400 years ago an emperor built a garden to please his wife,
A heavy burden for the common lovers,
Who neither have the resources nor the patience for giving such gifts.

The grandest garden in Kashmir,
Stands as a living monument to both love and imagination,
A timeless creation of time,
A resplendent design of architecture.

But history finds an older connection:
King Praversena II of Kashmir,
Founder of the city of Srinagar,
Built a hut in 2nd Cent. A.D., he called Shalimar,
To stay during the visits to saint Sukarma Swami at Harwan.

Whether it was created to worship god or love a woman,
Shalimar transcends everyday life.

Shalimar is a gift of love,
A sigh floating on the wings of time.

Since 1619 Shalimar has served people in different ways:
Excitement of natural beauty,
Relaxation from the ugliness and din of the world.
Often forgotten is that it was the token of love
From Emperor Jahangir to his wife Nur Jahan.
But love is celebrated less nowadays
And relaxation is more prized.

As the tryst with my friend was getting later and later,
All means to contact her exhausted,

I broke into a million anxieties,
Until I realized that it was the local morality
That forbade her to meet me.
My heart broke into a thousand pieces
But I did not curse Shalimar.

Afterward, I repeated my trip to the upper-most terrace
And read the inscription in the black pavilion:
“If there is paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this.”

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