

LIFE IS A CELEBRATION : *Anand karo* – says the late B V Doshi

Anand karo meaning “enjoy” in Gujarati

The passing away of B V Doshi on 24 January 2023, marks the end of an era for Indian architecture. Aged 95 (1927-2023) he lived a full life and was conferred the second highest civilian award of the Republic of India – Padma Vibhushan – a day after he passed away.

I have had the privilege to know him since my student days at school of architecture, CEPT, Ahmedabad, and over the years I have been very fortunate to receive some of his gems of wisdom on life and architecture, especially when he was member of the Governing Board and Chairman of the Auroville Town Development Council from 2010 onwards for a number of years.

Doshi aged like good wine – keeping absolutely fit till almost the last days, sharing his insights on life generously, being always available, curious and ready to meet young people and interact with them. One felt that infact Doshi internalised while externalising his thoughts! He sought out good critics and enjoyed a good debate. He believed in simplicity, yet was sophisticated; had a child-like curiosity and yet was very pragmatic; he saw the infinite in the finite and the infinite in the finite!

Even the last weeks when he was suffering from kidney failure with strict instructions not to be admitted to any hospital, he was happy to receive students and young architects. Doshi was a consummate story teller and his narratives questioned the mysteries of nature, celebration of life and values that sustain an individual within a community. Infact he once told me that “without a good story there is no good architecture!”

His growing family with grandchildren and great grand children, many of who are architects, was a great source of strength and joy for him. Most of all his camaraderie with his wife Kamuben was a special delight to see in the last decades.

He will continue to enrich, baffle and inspire us through his legacy of buildings and writings.

I would like to end this small obituary to an iconic legend with a quote by him:

“Remember, without dark night there can never be sunrise, don’t just think only of sunrise and smile or think of only the darkest night and imagine death. They are both a part of you. Accept nature and find the positive and think of it as a journey.

Mona Doctor-Pingel

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