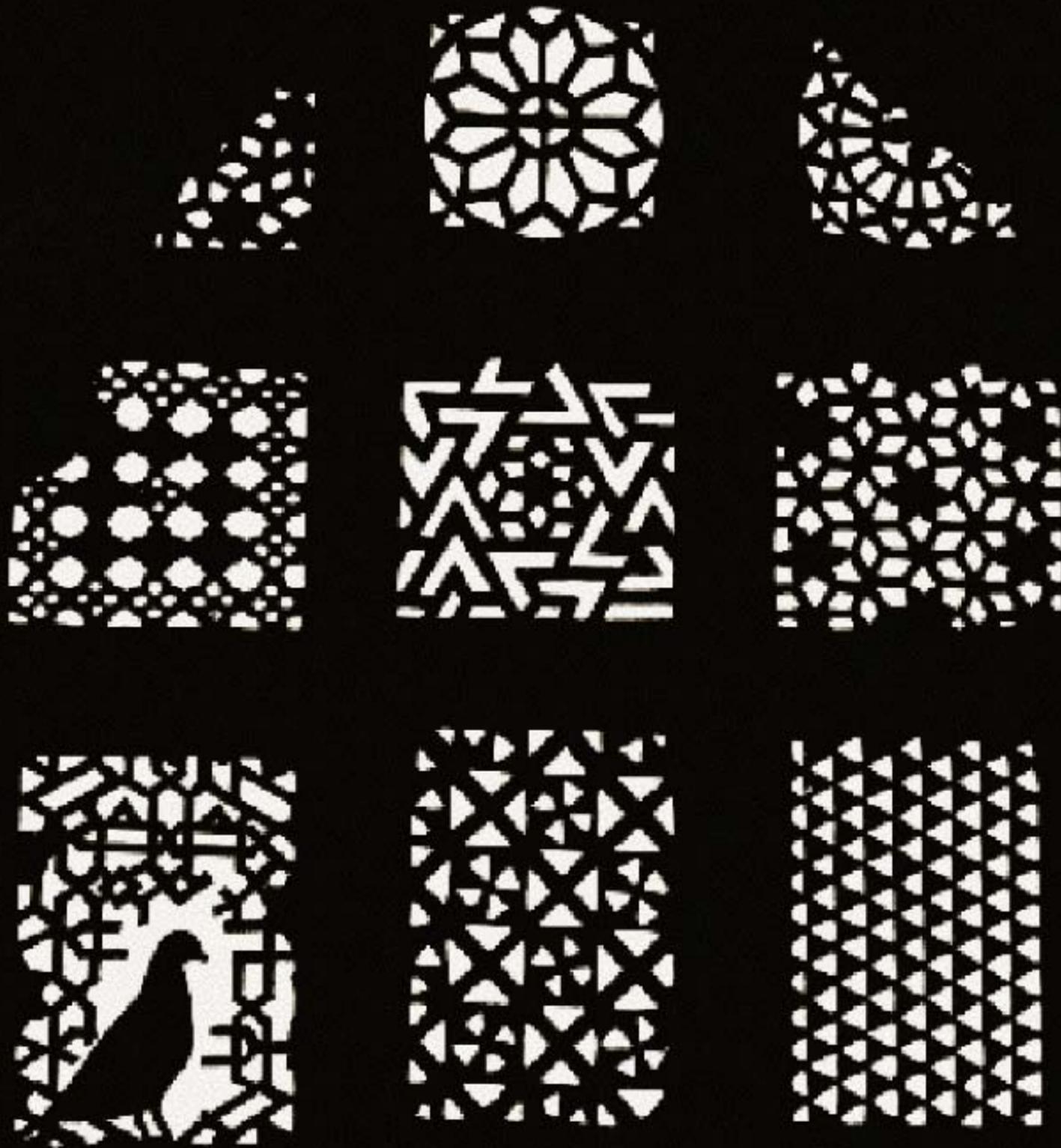


Vision from the Inner Eye



*The Photographic Art
of
A L Syed*

O P Sharma



Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad

His dedication and accomplishments in photography were so inspiring that the next generation of the Syed family also embarked on careers in this field. The three talented sons of K L Syed—Akhtar K Syed, Asad K Syed and Shabbir K Syed—known as the 'Syed brothers', became the pride of Gujarat during their 30-year career. A L Syed's son, Azmat A Syed, is also currently running a studio in Palanpur.

From the age of 15, although success came easily to him, he never rested on his laurels. Probably no other Indian photographer has produced such marvellous works consistently and for such a long period of time. Many of his contemporaries ceased working 30 to 40 years ago, but his fingers continued to press the shutter and always at the right moment. Even after he was afflicted by the dreaded Parkinson's disease at the age of 60, he continued to work tirelessly. Although his lean frail hands shook uncontrollably trying to grip even the lightest objects, when it came to holding a camera, surprisingly, his hands would remain rock steady enabling him to continue to produce stunning pictures of lasting value.

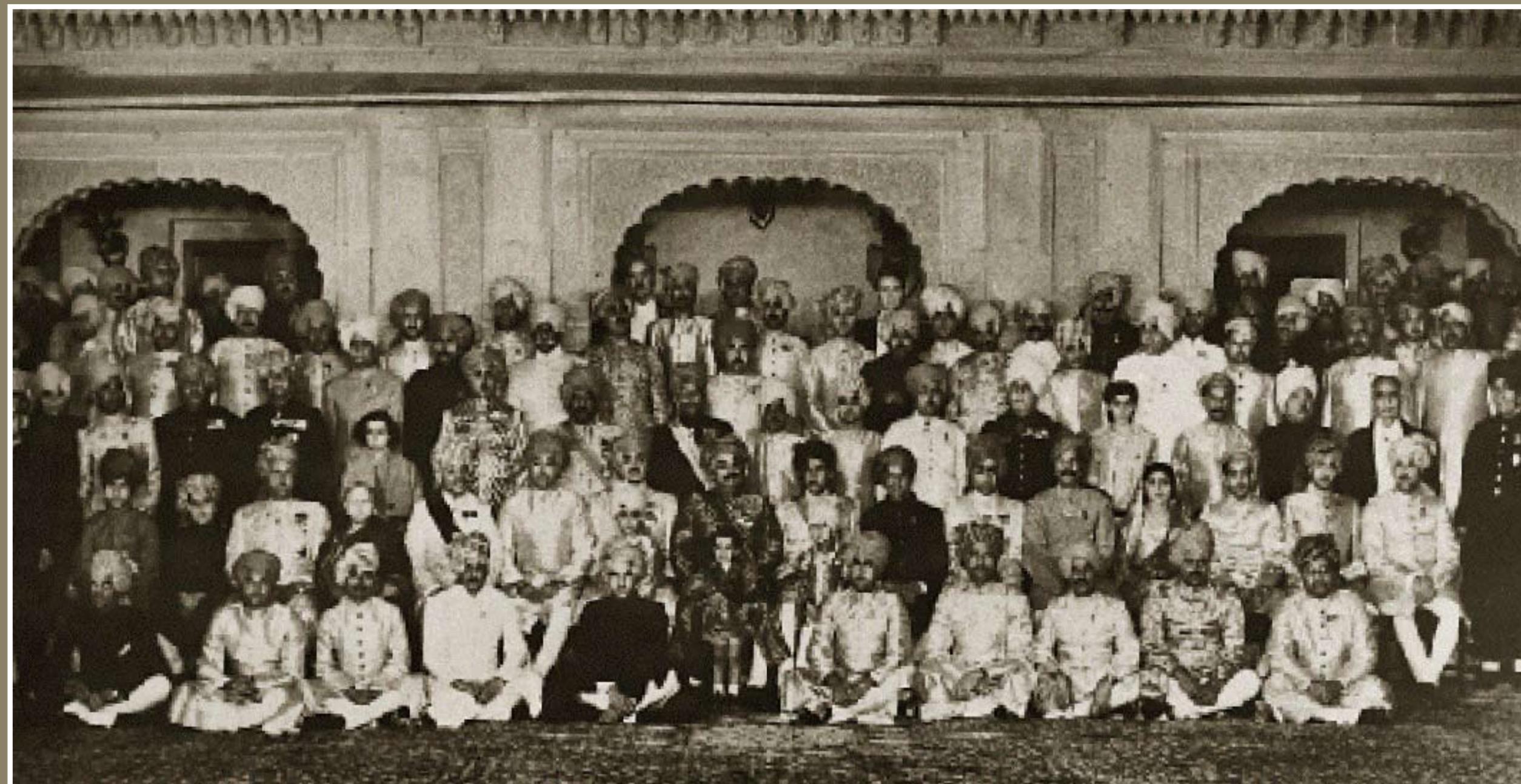
However, in the late eighties his health began to deteriorate rapidly and he was unable to continue working. Having devoted his entire life to photography, he mourned the closure of that chapter in his life. But he also lamented the quickly deteriorating standards of photography in the country, as contemporary photographers and photojournalists became consumed with producing for the international market images of poverty and the human being in misery. For a man who had maintained a very high level of integrity and preserved the dignity of the human spirit in all aspects of his work, this was difficult to both witness and accept. Further encouraged by his guru, in 1989 he chose to renounce the world and become a fakir. It was so simple in his own words: "I have seen everything, hence I have left everything."

On 30 August 1991, the legendary A L Syed, a pioneer in the true sense and the 'eye of the century', passed away, and a golden era in Indian photography came to an end. But his wonderful deeds and creations throughout his life have immortalised him.

O P Sharma



Rajmata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur



Marriage of Yuvaraj of Bikaner