

19 November 1998



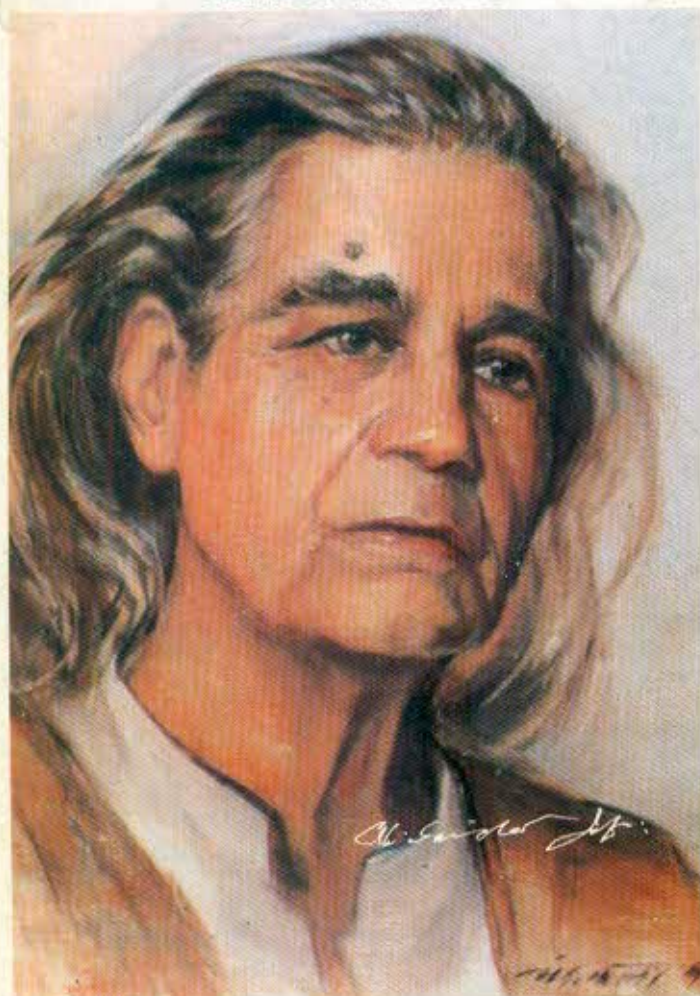
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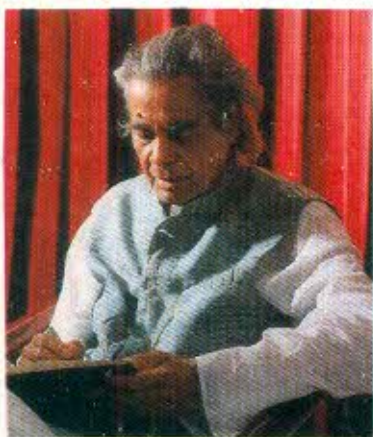


India International Centre

meet the author

Ali Sardar Jafri





*I am a fleeting moment
In the magic house
of days and nights,
I am a restless drop,
Travelling eternally,
From the flask of past
To the cup of the future.*

—Ali Sardar Jafri

Ali Sardar Jafri, celebrated Urdu poet, scholar and one of the founder-members of the Progressive Writers' Association (1930), is a major voice in Indian Literature to-day. His voice has transcended the barriers of language and territory.

Born in 1913 in Balrampur, U.P. in a traditional feudal family, Ali Sardar Jafri graduated from Delhi University and went to Lucknow University for his post-graduate studies. His active participation in the Freedom Movement hampered his higher studies.

Jafri's literary career began at 17. He first used the pen-name 'Hazin' but dropped it soon afterwards. Though he started his career as a short story writer, his first love was always poetry. The massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, economic exploitation by the British government and famines led the conscientious young Jafri to plunge into the Freedom Movement. His sharply critical and subvertive views invited the wrath of the establishment and resulted in his arrest in 1940 and 1941.



With his wife, grand son and Ms Gurratulain Hyder, 1970

His short story collection *Manzil* was published in 1938. He then became co-editor of the first progressive journal *Naya Daur*. His first collection of poems *Parwaz* was published in 1944. New themes and radical ideas brought new patterns of form, doctrine and imagery in his poetry. His second book, *Nai Duniya ko Salaam*, was a long allegorical poem in free verse.

So far nine books of verse, two plays, one memoir-reportage, three collections of critical essays including one volume of short stories have been published. Among his writings, *Parwaz* (1943), *Nai Duniya ko Salaam* (1948), *Khoon ki Lakeer* (1949), *Asia Jaag Utha* (1951), *Patthar ki Deewar* (1953), *Pairahan-e-Sharar* (1965), *Lahoo Pukarta Hai* (1978) and *November Mera Gahwara* (1998) are remarkable works.

Years later, a poem following the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992 drew the attention of many secular-minded people.

"The main theme of Ali Sardar Jafri's poetry is compassion, love and sensitivity, surviving amongst the callous inhumanity prevailing in our times. Avoiding the sophisticated aloofness and middle-class inertia, his poems are a living and provocative document, steeped in relationships and alienations, as well as the joy and the sadness of life. With his marvellous artistry, he has depicted poetically the survival of the hu-



With his wife

man spirit in the face of sorrow and oppression."

Jafri's literary critical works include *Taraqui Pasand Adab*, *Paigambaran-e-Sukhan*, and *Iqbal Shipasi*. His memoir-reportage under the title *Lucknow ki Paanch Raaten* was published in 1965.

He has edited and introduced two classics *Diwan-e-Ghalib* and *Diwan-e-Mir*, equally hailed both in Hindi and Urdu. Besides these, Jafri has selected and translated into Modern Hindi and Urdu poems of Kabir and Mirabai in separate volumes.

Jafri is a multi-faceted personality: story teller, playwright, film maker and social activist all rolled into one. Jafri has also written prolifically on social and political issues. He has written scripts for the documentary films on Kabir and Mohammad Iqbal. He directed and produced film on 'Role of 5000 Years Indian Literature' and 'Role of Literature in Freedom Struggle.'

His first of six volumes of a dictionary of Urdu poetry called *Sarmaya-e-Sukhan* is under print. English translation of selected poems of Jafri under the title 'My Journey' is about to be released.

He is an affectionate human being and a spokesman for the downtrodden. He entreats 'Give a man a

book for his mind, and food for his stomach."

Jafri is the recipient of several awards and honours which include the Soviet Land Nehru Award, the Government of India's Padmashree Award, Iqbal Gold Medal from Pakistani Government and Jnanpith Award.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PAIKAR, 1943



With Dr. Rajendra Prasad

A CHRONOLOGY

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| <p>1913 Born in Balrampur, U.P.</p> <p>1938 His short story collection <i>Manzil</i> published</p> <p>1943 First book of poems <i>Parwaz</i> published</p> <p>1949 <i>Khoon ki Lakeer</i> published</p> <p>1951 <i>Asia Jaag Utha</i> published</p> <p>1965 Soviet Land Nehru Award</p> <p>1967 Honoured with Padmashree</p> <p>1978 Iqbal Gold Medal by the Government of Pakistan</p> <p>1979 Uttar Pradesh Urdu Akademi Award</p> <p>1983 Kumaran Asan Award for <i>Asia Jaag Utha</i></p> <p>1986 D. Litt (Honoris</p> | <p>Causa) by the Aligarh Muslim University</p> <p>1986 International Urdu Award by the Canadian Association and Academy of Urdu Literature in Toronto</p> <p>1986 Iqbal Samman</p> <p>1992 Gangadhar Mehr Award for poetry by the Sambhalpur University, Orissa</p> <p>1995 Zoe Ansari Award by the Maharashtra State Urdu Academy</p> <p>1997 Sant Dnyaneshwar Award by the Maharashtra State</p> <p>1997 Maulana Mazharul Award for poetry by the Maharashtra State</p> <p>1998 Jnanpith Award</p> |
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Release of Sarhad