meet the author

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 today. 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 subversive views invited the wrath of the 'establishment' and resulted in his arrest in 1940 and 1941.

With his wife, grand son and Ms Qurratulain 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.


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 sensibility, 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 human spirit in the face of sorrow and oppression."

Jafri's literary critical works include *Taraqui Pasand Adab*, *Paigambaran-e-Sukhan*, and *Iqbal Shipasti*. 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**

**Poetry**

*Parwaz*, 1943

*Nai Duniya ko Salaam*, 1948 (Translated into many Indian languages)

*Khoon ki Lakeer*, 1949

*Amn ka Sitara*, 1950 (Translated into Russian, English and eleven Indian languages)

*Asia Jaag Utha*, 1951 (Translated into English and Hindi)

*Pattar Ki Deewar*, 1953

*Ek Khwab Aur*, 1964

*Pairahan-e-Sharar*, 1965

*Lahoo Pukarta Hai*, 1978

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*Mera Safar* (Selected poems in Hindi)

After receiving D. Litt from Aligarh Muslim University, 1986
With Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 1964


SARMAYA-E-SUKHAN, a dictionary of Urdu Poetry (First Volume) (under print).

Prose

MANZIL (Short story collection), 1938

TARAQQI PASAND ADAB, (A book of the Progressive Writers' movement and its literature in Urdu), 1953

LUCKNOW KI PAANCH RAATEN (Reminiscences and Reportage), 1965

IQBAL SHINASI (Iqbal Studies)

PAIGHAMBARAN-E-SUKHAN (Studies on Kabir, Mir Taqi Mir and Ghalib), 1970

Plays

YEH KIS KA KHOON HA? (Play both in Urdu and Hindi), 1943

PAIKAR, 1943

With Dr. Rajendra Prasad
A CHRONOLOGY

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

Release of Sarhad