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29 June 2010

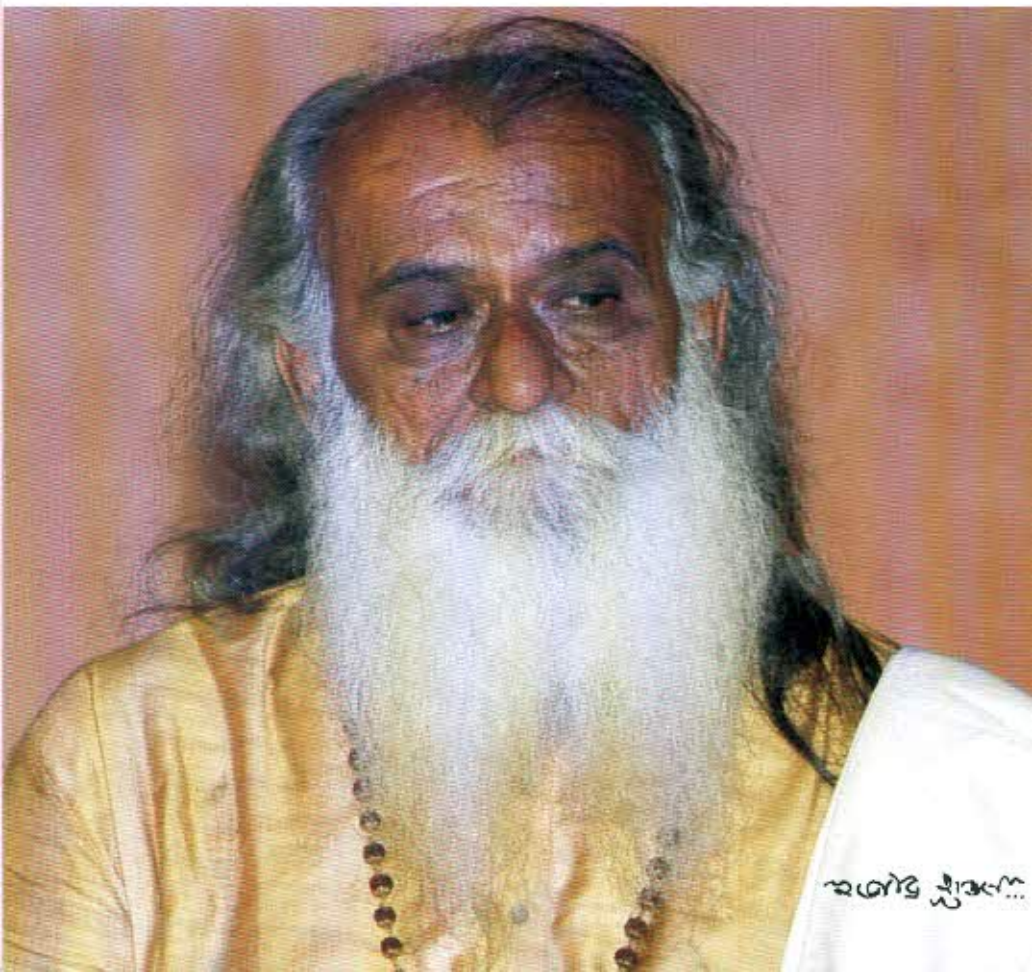


Sahitya Akademi

invites you to

meet the author

Rajendra Shukla





A point, a face, a being...
 An expression that cannot be
 separate or can be together
 The consonant and the dissonant
 Creating a consciously unconscious cacophony
 Of one note, of one beat, of infinite bits and pieces
 Turning into one eternal....
 Oh! This wonderful cosmic symphony...

From the poem "Vrundgaan" by
 Rajendra Shukla, translation by
 Dhaivat Shukla.

*At a tender age I realized that a word is the
 medium of expression of my existence. I
 worship the word and take it as a blessing.
 My aim is to experience, through the
 words, the great silence that exists beyond
 the word.*

- Rajendra Shukla.

Born on 12 October 1942 at Bantwa

in the Junagadh district of Gujarat, Rajendra Shukla began writing poetry in the forms, including gazal, that were prevalent among his contemporary poets. Gradually, his poetic inclination and creativity started relying on the form of gazal and soon he found that he expressed himself better in gazal than in any other form of poetry. Incidentally, his first poem, published in *Kumar* in 1962, was a gazal.

Although his major work is considered to be in the form of gazal, he has successfully tried his hand at several other metrical and non-metrical forms of poetry such as geet, achhandas, sonnet, etc. From early stages of his creative endeavours Indian philosophy greatly fascinated him and he adored Acharya Gaudpad, Srimat Shankaracharya and Ramana Maharshi. The realization of the Supreme Truth as held by the folk and saint tradition of the medieval Gujarat-Saurashtra nourished his commitment to non-dualism, and its ingenious and simple style of expression cherished his creative instinct. He believes in the suggestive power of a word and his creative instinct is influenced by **A b h i n a v g u p t a** and Aanandvardhana.

In fact, the world of his poetry is enriched with experiences of the



In conversation with Sri Murari Babu at Narsinh Mehta Award function



With Prof. Takhtasinhji Parmar, one of his teachers

sages and seers such as Yagnavalkya, Nachiketa, Vishwamitra, Ashtavakra and this creative-philosophical thread continues to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Narsinha Mehta, Akho, Meerabai, Dada Mekarani, Dayaram upto Nhanalal, Kalapi, Balavantraji Thakor, Kant and Sagar Maharaj, and of course the tradition of folk and oral literature, and literature of Bardic tradition. He is equally conversant with the long and rich tradition of Urdu poetry as well. The reader can experience the tinge of Sufi philosophy, faith in his gazals. Consequently, the diction of his poetry encapsulates diverse cultures and literatures and abounds in allusions to tales, legends and myths. His poetic world reflects influences of Shankar Vedanta also, from Shriman Nathuram Sharma to Maharshi Ramana.

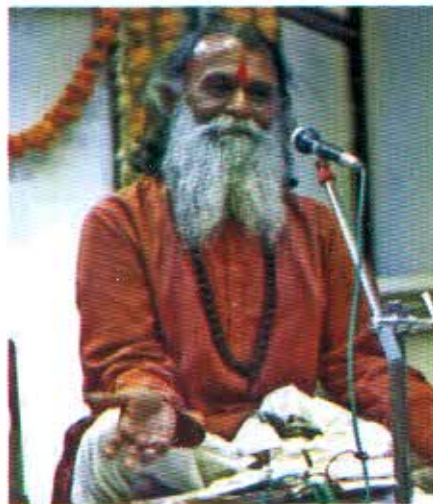
Rajendra Shukla's overwhelming contribution to the form of gazal is widely acclaimed by critics and literary connoisseurs. The distinct qualities, to name a few, of his gazal are the uniqueness of form, diversity of metrics, structure and diction, a successful intermingling of the spirits of other traditional forms of poetry in Gujarati like Baaramaasi, Pad, Dhol, Bhajan,

Bharathri songs, etc., and effortless incorporation of the insights collected from folklore. His gazal stands Indian to the core without losing its *gazaliyat*, besides he is gifted with a mellifluous voice cultivated for recitations. It has been observed many a time that a number of people from the audiences remember his poems by heart. He has proved to be a beloved poet and known among his followers as "Bapu" or "Rishi Kavi".

Considering his utter detachment for publishing his poetry, his connoisseurs formed a committee and made a collective attempt to publish his poems and *Gazal Samhita* is the fruit of it. One of his inspired poems - "Divya Setu" - was inscribed on a rock at Mt. Girnar Valley at Rupayatan, Junagadh, on behest of Sri Murari Bapu who inaugurated this inscription at Narsinh Mehta Award ceremony.

His thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha and Old Gujarati languages lends him a firm background of evolution of the languages, literatures and culture of India from the Vedic period to the present and harmoniously contributes to the diction and themes of poetry making it a sheer celebration of living life creatively.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY



at a poetry recitation programme

POETRY

- Komal Rishabh* (1970)
- Sva-Vachak ni Shodh* (1973)
- Antar Gandhar* (1981)
- Gazal Samhita* (2005)

AUDIO CDS

- Paathpratishthaa Vol. I* (2007)
(vocal recitation by him of his poems)
- Paathpratishthaa Vol. II* (2007)
(vocal recitation by him of his gazals)
- Sahrudaya Samaksha Vol. III*
(a collection of archival audio recordings
From 1981 to 2006 done from various
poetry recitation programmes)

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1942 Born on 12 October in Gujarat
- 1962 First poem published in *Kumar*
- 1967 Received an MA from School of Languages, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad; joined Sri Natavarshimji Arts College, Chhotaudepur, as lecturer
- 1969 Joined Gujarat University, Ahmedabad
- 1970 Best collection of poems of the year to *Komal Rishabh* by the Government of Gujarat
- 1974 Married to Nayana Jani
- 1977 Joined Pandya High School, Dahod, as supernumerary lecturer
- 1981 Best collection of poems of the year to *Antar Gandhar* by the Government of Gujarat; Kavi Sri Nhanalal Prize
- 1982 Sought voluntary retirement; Uma-Sneharashmi Prize
- 2001 Kavi Kalapi Award by Indian National Theatre
- 2005 Gujarat Sahitya Academi Award to *Gazal Samhita*
- 2006 Narsinh Mehta Award; Ranjitram Suvarnachandrak
- 2007 The Sahitya Akademi Award to *Gazal Samhita*
- 2008 Narmad Chandrak
- 2009 Vali Gujarati Gazal Award
- 2010 Lekh Ratna Award from Kanchi Shankaracharya



in a joyous mood with his contemporary poet-friends



with his wife just after receiving Ranjitram Suvarnachandrak