

Classic Poetry Series

Ashfaq Hussain
- poems -

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Ashfaq Hussain(1 January 1951)

Ashfaq Hussain Zaidi (Urdu: آشفق حسين زيدى) is a leading modern Urdu poet and an author of more than 10 books of poetry and literary criticism. He is considered by many as the foremost expert on the life and works of great Urdu poets Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmad Faraz and also on Progressive Writers Movement. For his contributions to Urdu literature, Hussain was awarded the Presidential Pride of Performance from the government of Pakistan.

 Early Life

Ashfaq Hussain was born in a lower middle class family in Karachi, Pakistan on January 1, 1951. The eldest son of eight siblings, he lost his mother at the age of 13. He struggled throughout his academic years by working various part time jobs. He earned his Master's Degree in Urdu Literature from the University of Karachi in 1974. Hussain was elected Vice President of the Students Union of Urdu Department in 1973. He then spent one year as lecturer at Government Degree Science College, Karachi. Before migrating to Canada, Hussain was working as a Programme Officer at the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi.

 Early Years in Canada

Ashfaq Hussain migrated to Canada in March 1980 and currently resides in Brampton, a suburb of Toronto. He initially started his business in Travel and Tourism industry. Hussain founded the Writers Forum of Pakistani Canadians in 1982 and was subsequently elected President of the organization. He then established U.I. Publishers, through which he edited and published the quarterly Urdu journal , "Urdu International Canada" until 1988. Hussain was also seen on Asian Horizons, the precursor to Asian Television Network, dating back to 1980.

 Career

Ashfaq Hussain started hosting an Urdu program on Asian Horizons in 1980. After initially working part-time, Hussain joined Asian Television Network full-time when ATN beame a 24 channel in 1997. He currently serves as an Associated Producer at Asian Television Network, Newmarket. He is regularly hosting the following TV shows: Urdu Rang, Asian Horizon and Asian Digest.

Amongst the thousands of celebrities whom Hussain has interviewed since the 1980s, notable includes:

- Dilip Kumar - Lata Mangeshkar - Kader Khan - Ghulam Ali - Zia Mohyeddin - Tahira Syed - Talat Aziz - M. F. Husain - Sudhir Narain - Faiz Ahmed Faiz - Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi - Jamiluddin Aali - Munir Niazi - Ahmad Faraz - Professor Gopi Chand Narang - Ali Sardar Jafri - Farooq Leghari - Iftekhar Arif - Dr. Ludmila Vaseleva.

For his outstanding contributions, Hussain received a Lifetime Achievement Award from ATN in 2007.

** Views on Poetry **

Hussain on poetry:

“Poetry is something that knows no boundaries and is perhaps the only part of literature which influences public opinion regardless of country, nation or state affiliations.”

“The progressive movement has ended but progress can't. That is why I consider my poetry progressive in nature and think it would remain so because literature can't be static.”

Hussain on Faiz:

Faiz's multi-faceted work was “deep enough for one to drown in.

** 2010 Vancouver Olympics **

In February 2010, ATN provided coverage of various events of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Hussain provided sports broadcasting of many events, such as freestyle skiing and long track speed skating. On February 13, Hussain and special Olympic guest analyst Salman Bazmi provided play-by-play analysis of Canada's first olympic medal at the games; a silver medal by Jennifer Heil in Freestyle skiing, women's moguls. The following day, Hussain and Bazmi provided play-by-play analysis of Canada's first ever gold medal at an Olympic games held in Canada. Alexandre Bilodeau won the gold medal in Freestyle skiing, men's moguls.

** Awards **

Maulana Mohammad Ali Johar Award (Delhi, India)

Saleem Jafri International Award (Doha, Qatar)

Asian Television Network Life Time Achievement Award 2007 (Newmarket,

Canada)

Mr Ashfaq Hussain was announced as a recipient of the Presidential Pride of Performance award by the Government of Pakistan on August 14, 2010 becoming the first Pakistani Canadian to be honored with the civil award. He received the award in a ceremony on March 23, 2011.

A Love Poem For My Son

With your eyes, I
will see those days
which have yet to come.
With your feet, I
will run very fast
on dream pathways
which are still obscure
With your hands , I
will touch those mountains
whose very thought
makes me breathless

Those mountains and those roads
on which you walk,
a new era
that is yours.
I will not even see
this new era
but my eyes will kiss
its every moment,
with these bright eyes
that are your eyes.
In your eyes
like light I shine
like love I abide
like a dream I am alive
In your beautiful eyes
all my dreams
hide in a special corner;
and if perchance these dreams
bloom with fragrance of flowers
in their sweet scent
you should keep
all the letters of my name
with care.

Ashfaq Hussain

A Suggestion

You think
that by wearing a green spectacle
these dry meadows
will turn verdant and fresh
these hapless harvests
will pluck out their autumnal garb
like a dry leaf
at the hands of which merciless winds,
loses its being.

You think
that just because of the laughter on your lips
the bitterness of this environment
will self-destruct and die
but this is not possible.

Why not snatch the trembling helplessness
from the lips of our environment?
Let us pluck out the moonlight
which hides behind a ruined wall,
let us look for light.
Life is our birthright
Let us save it from death.

Ashfaq Hussain

Muhabbat Aur Zaroorat

From the core of my heart
From its very depths
I concede
'I love you'
But what I'm saying
It's quite possible
Carries the truth which mightn't have undergone
The real test of fire
The word love that my lips utter
It's quite possible
Was born out of necessity

Ashfaq Hussain