

Classic Poetry Series

Akhtar Sheerani
- poems -

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Akhtar Sheerani(04 May 1905 – 09 September 1948)

Akhtar Shairani (also spelled 'Sheerani', 'Sherani', 'Shirani', 'Shairani') (Urdu: اکhtar شیرانی) is considered one of the most prolific romantic poets of Urdu.

 Early Life

Akhtar Shairani was born as Muhammad Dawood Khan in Afghan breed of Shirani tribe who had come to India with Sultan Mahmood Ghaznawi and had stayed back in Tonk. He was a son of Hafiz Mahmood Shairani, a scholar and teacher of high repute, who had started teaching at Islamia College, Lahore in 1921. In 1928 he moved to Oriental College, Lahore. Young Dawood moved to Lahore at a very young age and lived there throughout his life. He did his Munshi Fazil degree in 1921 and Aadeeb Fazil degree in 1922 (degrees in Arabic and Persian) from Oriental College, Lahore.

Despite the efforts of his father, he could not continue his education and became a full time poet. His teacher in poetry (ustad) was Maulana Tajwar Najibabadi, a well-respected personality in literary circles of Lahore who used to publish literary magazines.

 Works

As to his skill, Akhtar was quite innovative and introduced new modes in Urdu poetry. At such a green age, he wrote mature and inspiring poetry. He was called 'Akhtar-e-Romance' (the poet of romance). His best known collections of poetry include Akhtaristan, Subh-e bahaar, and Shahnaz. He had been editor for the literary magazines Intikhab, Bahaaristan, Khyaalistan, and Romaan from 1923 to 1939. He also wrote columns for dailies Hamdard and Zamindar of Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan respectively.

In total, he left nine collections of his verses. In prose, apart from his fictions and translations, his essays on literary, critical and historical subjects are in abundance.

 Style and Influence on Urdu Poetry

Youth dominates Akhtar's poetry like that of Shelley, Keats, and Byron. Lyricism, subtlety and novelty infuse a new spirit onto his poetry. He exhales verse as a flower exhales fragrance. His verses touching various colourful subjects flow with such tremendous ease and felicity as the reader is moved to ecstasy. Most of the

critics have concentrated only on one aspect of his Love Poetry. However, his work was not confined to just the physical beauty of woman. Woman to him is beautiful in all her forms and shapes; the beloved, the wife, the mother and the sister. Wordsworth, the father of romantic poetry finds the immanence of divine spirit in the objects of nature. Akhtar's depiction of nature is second to none but unlike Wordsworth, he finds the objects of nature imbued with the beauty of woman. He uses woman as a symbol that stands for beauty and love permeating the whole universe.

Variegated aspects and artistic skills of Akhtar Shairani's poetry lend him a distinguished place in modern Urdu poetry. His influence on Urdu literature, and poetry in particular, earned him a repute of trendsetter. Several distinguished Urdu poets and literary figures have imbibed directly from him.

His famous poems include:

"Ai ishq kahiN le chal"

"O des se aane waale bataa."

"Ae ishq hamein barbad na kar".

** Later Life **

Akhtar Shirani's life was a succession of tragedies. His young son Javed Mahmood died, his close friend Mirza Shuja Khan committed suicide, his son in law Naziruddin Shirani was accidentally drowned, and he was rejected by the woman, named Salma, that he loved. That made him turn to alcohol. On his physical and mental condition, Shorish Kashmiri who was a well known literary, political, and social figure of Lahore, wrote that it was better not to see him, since one would be so depressed. He died in Lahore on September 9, 1948.

Aj Ke Raat

Akhtar Sheerani

Akheri Umid

Akhtar Sheerani

Ananiat

Akhtar Sheerani

Ansu

Akhtar Sheerani

Dua

Akhtar Sheerani

Nur Jahan

Akhtar Sheerani