

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Ali Sardar Jafri**  
**- poems -**

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# Ali Sardar Jafri(29 November 1913 - 01 August 2000)

Ali Sardar Jafri (Hindi: अली सार्दार ज़ाफ़री, Urdu: اعلی ساردار جعفری) was an Urdu writer, poet, critic and film lyricist from India.

## <b> Early Life and Education </b>

Ali Sardar Jafri was born in an aristocratic family in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh, where he spent his formative years.

His early influences were Josh Malihabadi, lyricist Jigar Muradabadi and Firaq Gorakhpuri. In 1933, he joined Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and soon got exposed to Communist ideology, subsequently he was expelled from the University in 1936, for 'political reasons'. Eventually he graduated from Zakir Husain College (Delhi College), Delhi University in 1938, though his post graduation studies at Lucknow University ended prematurely following his arrest during 1940-41 for writing anti-War poems, and taking part in Congress led political activities as Secretary of the university's Students' Union.

## <b> Literary Career </b>

Ali Sardar Jafri published his first collection of short stories titled, Manzil (Destination) in 1938, which started his literary career, and his first collection of poems, Parvaz (Flight) came out in 1944. In 1936, he presided over the first conference of Progressive Writers' Movement in Lucknow, a stature he maintain for the rest of his life. In 1939, he became co-editor of Naya Adab, a literary journal devoted to the Progressive Writers' Movement, and the journal continued til 1949.

Ali Sardar Jafri was involved in several social, political and literary movements. On 20 January 1949, he was arrested at Bhiwandi, for holding of a (now banned) Progressive Urdu writers' conference, despite warnings from Morarji Desai, the Chief Minister of Bombay State; three months later, he was rearrested.

His important works as a lyricist include Dharti Ke Lal (1946) and Pardesi (1957) .

Between 1948 to 1978, he published eight poetry collections, which include, Nai Duniya Ko Salaam (Salute to the New World), (1948), Khoon Ki Lakeer, Amn Ka Sitara, Asia Jaag Utha (Asia Awakes) (1951), Patthar Ki Deewar (The Stone Door) (1953), Ek Khwab Aur, Pairahan-i-Sharar (The Robe of Sparks) (1965);

and Lahu Pukarta Hai (The Blood Calls) (1965), which were followed by Awadh ki khak-i-haseen, Subhe Farda, Mera Safar (My journey) and last anthology titled as Sarhad, which then Prime Minister of India carried with him on his bus journey to Lahore.

During his literary career spanning five decades, Ali Sardar Jafri, also edited anthologies of Kabir, Mir, Ghalib and Meera Bai with his introductions, wrote two plays for the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), produced a documentary film, Kabir, Iqbal and Freedom, and two television serials, including a 18 parts, Kahkashan, based on lives and works of noted Urdu poets, and Mehfil-e-yaaran in which he interviewed people from different walks of life, and his autobiography. He was also the editor and publisher of one of the leading and most respected literary Urdu magazines of the sub-continent, Guftagu

He died on 1 August 2000 in Mumbai, and on his first death anniversary in 2001, a book "Ali Sardar Jafri: The youthful boatman" of joy was released.

<b> Excerpts of Poems </b>

Ai watan khake watan woh bhi tujhe de denge  
Bach raha hai jo laho abke fasaddat ke baad  
(O my country, my beloved land we shall be most willing to sacrifice  
Whatever blood is left in us after the bloodbath of riots)  
- Awadh ki khak-i-Haseen

Ghareeb Sita ke ghar pe kab tak rahegi Ravan ki hukmrani  
Draupadi ka libas uske badan se kab tak chhina karega  
Shakuntala kab tak andhi taqdeer ke bhanwar mein phansi rahegi  
Yeh Lakhnau ki shiguftagi maqbaron mein kab tak dabi rahegi

(How long will Ravan rule over the home of poor Sita  
How long will Draupadi be deprived of her garment  
How long will Shakuntala be enmeshed in the abyss of fate  
How long will the freshness of Lucknow remain buried under the imposing  
tombs?)  
- Awadh ki Khak-i-Haseen

<b> Awards </b>

He is only the third Urdu poet to receive the Jnanpith Award (1997) after Firaq Gorakhpuri (1969) and Qurratulain Hyder (1989). He has also been conferred with several other honours and awards including Padma Shri in 1967, Gold medal

from the Pakistan Government for Iqbal studies (1978); Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy Award for poetry, Makhdoom Award, Faiz Ahmad Faiz Award, Iqbal Samman of the Madhya Pradesh government and the Sant Dyaneshwar Award of the Maharashtra government.

The Aligarh Muslim University had conferred a . on him in 1986, fifty years after he was expelled from the University. His writings have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages.

### **<b> Personal Life </b>**

Ali Sardar Jafri married Sultana in January 1948, and the couple had two sons.

# Ek Khwaab Aur

Ali Sardar Jafri

# Gham Kaa Hiiraa

Ali Sardar Jafri

# Lamhon Ke Chiraagh

Ali Sardar Jafri

# Raat Khuubsurat Hai Niind Kyun Nahiin Aatii

Ali Sardar Jafri



# Shikast-E-Shauq Ko Takmeel-E-Aarzuu Kahiye

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