

Poetry Series

**Shaikh Ayaz**  
**- poems -**

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## Shaikh Ayaz(02-03-1923)

Shaikh Ayaz was born on 2 March 1923 in the district of Shikarpur, Sindh. Shaikh Ayaz is one of the major voices in the twentieth century poetry. His literary career spanned almost six decades and displayed an amazing variety of poetry and prose. To each genre he brought his unique vision and transforming power of language. Ayaz is to Sindh what Gracia Lora is to Spain, Pablo Neruda to Latin America and Nazim Hikmat to Turkey.

Sheikh Ayaz is a darling poet of Sindh. Common people dance to the tunes of his musical poetry. Intellectuals discuss his poetry in their meetings and wonder at the vast canvas of his poetry encompassing not only Sindh and Hind but the entire world. His poetry is considered an accident, because it is quite different from and far superior not only to composition of his contemporary poets but all other Sindhi poets of the past except the great Shah Abdul Latif who is acknowledged as the greatest ever Sindhi poet.

Ayaz is master of Sindhi language. He revived many old words and interpreted the same with new meaning. Originally, he had written a number of poems in Urdu, but when he realized that one can express oneself best in ones mother tongue, he bade goodbye to Urdu. He has also translated Shah-Jo-Risalo in Urdu. Ayaz infused new life into the old form of poetry and revived the Waaee, which has now become a popular genre of modern Sindhi poetry.

The poetry of Ayaz retains multiple themes. He composed his immortal poems on Sindh, freedom fights the world, poets, poetry, and genius. Women, love, religion, culture, philosophy and death have also been is greatest subjects depicted in the poetry. He talked against the two nation theory. He criticized the dictatorial rule of his time. Totalitarianism has been also the breathtaking theme of Ayazs poetry. Finally, after living a tragic-poetic life, he physically, bade goodbye to Sindh and this mortal world on 28 December,1997.

-Songs of Freedom the compiled version of Sheikh Ayaz's translated poetry

# A Trees's Thoughts

I said to the liyar tree,  
'I am hungry  
When will you bear red flowers? '  
It was evening by then,  
And in the twilight  
The liyar tree was thinking hard.

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

# Cactus And Dew

I am a cactus from Thar,  
and also the dew, which knows no thorns,  
Is not pricked by them;  
It falls on a deserted village  
or a garden  
With the same freshness;  
the bee can soak its wings in it  
but cannot sting,  
And wasps  
Can fly away with it, buzzing;  
The sun flower can see it take flight  
As soon as the sun comes out.

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

# Death's Rhyme

Yesterday the chief Justice  
spoke thus to Emperor Aurangzeb:  
'Sarmad is lost in himself,  
he is nothing but a rhymester,  
Why put him to death, it's not necessary! '

Aurangzeb laughed and said:  
'Every quartrain of his is a dagger drawn,  
As it reaches its concluding rhyme,  
It has a sharp edge  
And each time it cuts off my head.'

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

# Freedom

Who can say there is no freedom here?  
Jackals are free,  
Flies are free,  
Here the intellectuals are free,  
Poets are free to hold devotional recitations on television,  
The farmer is free,  
He can pick out line from his head or not,  
Everybody is free on this land cracking-up  
Where snakes hide in the crevices  
And wolves dig out dens for their cubs.

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

## Next Crop

You must remember this:  
When I am dead and gone  
And there appears a new poet,  
Then it will be like  
The sugarcane field,  
When after one crop  
The new one sprouts by itself  
From the roots of the old.

-

Translated by: Pirzado & Asif Faruukhi

Shaikh Ayaz

# Poem

Everything is an illusion  
Except these bars  
which I want to break  
But cannot.

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

# Red

A child in the Laar  
eating a watermelon  
or playing  
a red mouthful  
of harmonica.

-

Translated by: Farrukhi & Pirzado

Shaikh Ayaz

# To Lorca

Lorca!

You and I are kindred souls;

Born of eternity,  
we have to return to it.

The distance  
From Spain to Sindh,  
From eternity to eternity,  
Is not more than a handspan.

-

Translated by: Pirzado & Asif Faruukhi

Shaikh Ayaz

# Winter Rain

A small lamp  
am I  
When the stars hide their face  
in the sheet of winter rain,  
I keep on  
burning.

Shaikh Ayaz