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Sahitya Akademi
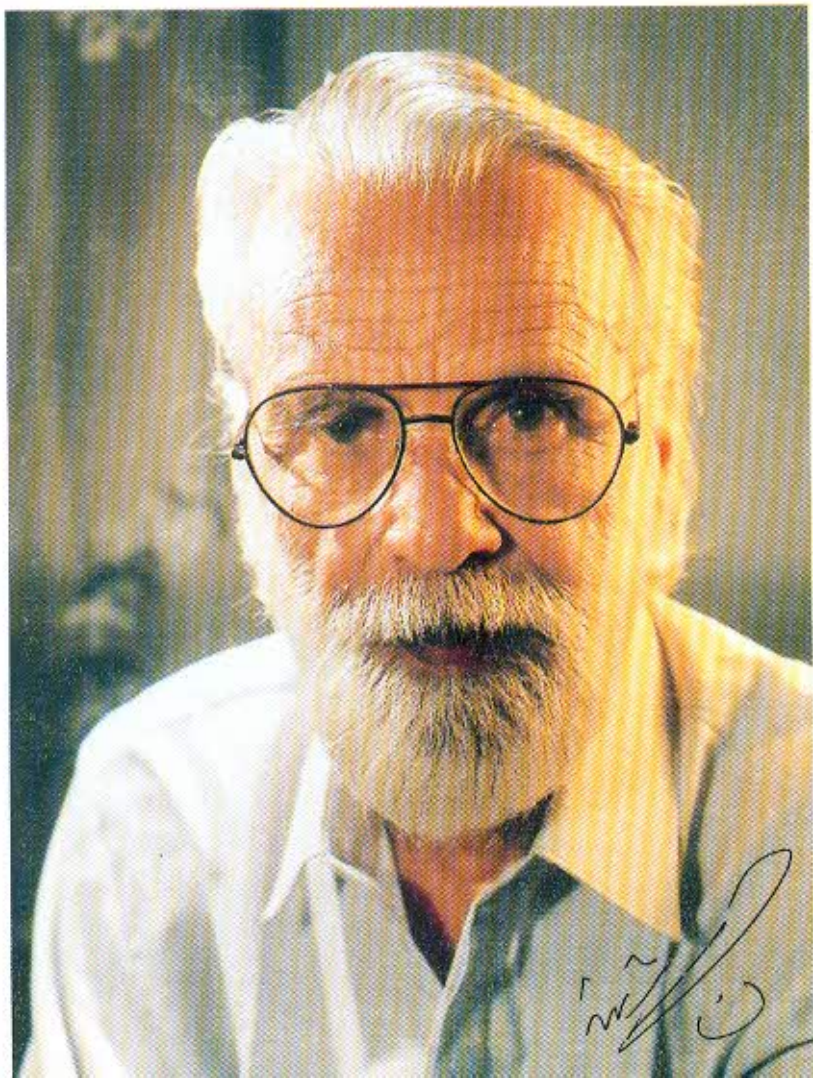

Marathwada Sahitya
Parishad

invite you to

meet the author

Bashar Nawaz

Bashar Nawaz, over the last fifty years, has been regularly publishing his works in several Urdu literary journals in India and abroad. His ghazals and poems are included in almost all the anthologies of the best Urdu poetry from 1960 onwards.

Bashar Nawaz believes in social values in literature, but gives more emphasis in his compositions to the classical approach. It is his conviction that each language has its own strong traditions and classics; they are like a mirror of the social, political and cultural values of the particular group of people who speak that language. No literature can be produced and cultivated in any language without the foundation of the cultural, traditional and classical values of its language community, says he. At the same time, one cannot bind any language down to its particular idioms, forms and phrases; a language group which has a centuries-long tradition of literature can flourish without any such bindings. Bashar Nawaz, therefore, has an insightful perception not only of Urdu classical poetry but of other Indian languages and literatures.

When Bashar Nawaz started his literary journey, he was influenced by the Leftist movement which was the trend in those days. Bashar Nawaz was fascinated by some renowned progressive writers of the region and coming under their spell, started composing romantic lyrics about a classless society. But the political, economical and social changes which were sweeping across India after Independence made him wriggle out of the romantic lyricism and unreal ideas about evolution and social change. Bashar Nawaz felt that in such an atmosphere there was little room for extremism. He, along with his group of young writers, were in search of a new idiom. At that time, one of his close childhood friends, Dr. Waheed Akhtar, wrote an article "Sukhangastarana Baat" which was published in the monthly *Saba* from Hyderabad. Sayyed Sajjad Zaheer, a staunch progressive writer, made a strong response. This was the beginning of a dialogue between the extremism of the progressive movement and modernism in Urdu literature. Bashar Nawaz, actively participated in those dialogues and literary discussions and wrote articles as well defending modernism. He also
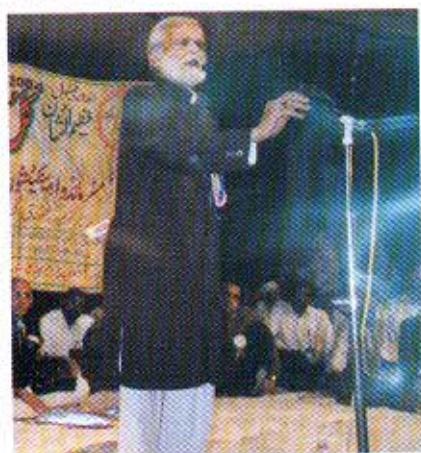
Reciting poems at an All India Mushaira

With wife Chand Sultana and grand daughters

participated in the first Modernist Writers' Conference held at Allahabad in 1964. In this conference, senior Urdu writers like Eihtesham Hussain, Amrit Rai, Firaq Gorakhpuri and the new breed of modernists like Ramlal, Shamsur Rehman Farooqui, Shahryar and writers, poets and academicians from other Indian languages also participated. His speech " What is the meaning of Modernism in Urdu?" was very well-received, appreciated and discussed.

His poems have been translated in to Marathi, Hindi, Punjabi and Kannada and published in prestigious journals and anthologies. Ten of his poems were translated in to English by Zaheer Ali and are included in the anthology *Off the Spotlight*, published in 2000. Anwar Sadeed of Pakistan has made special mention of Bashar Nawaz in his book *A Short History of Urdu Literature*.

In the field of literary criticism, Bashar Nawaz's contribution is very distinguished. At a time when modernism went through extremes and was bogged down by the predominance of Western literary theories, he wrote several critical articles explaining the importance of the traditional approach and of classics and illustrated as to how, in the context, traditions can sustain literature. He has been persistently arguing that no literary experiment can be of any worth, if it is carried out in a vacuum. A conscientious study of Western literary trends, he believes, is a welcome sign but their unrestrained simulation in the name of modernism and without any regard to the literary genius and the classics of Indian languages will lead to undesirable results.

Bashar Nawaz has written lyrics for a few Hindi films like *Bazar, Lori, Jane Wafa, Tere Shahar Mein, Shanker Khan* etc. Renowned ghazal singers Mehdi Hasan, Ghulam Ali, Talat Aziz and others have sung his ghazals. He also wrote 13 episodes of the T.V. Serial *Amir Khusru* which was telecast on Doordarshan in the year 1983. He has written 26 episodes of a musical opera entitled *Sare Jahan Se Achcha Hindustan Hamara* which was broadcast by All India Radio. He has scripted a serial *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* which was televised on Delhi Doordarshan in 2000. He has also written about 60 radio dramas and performed in them.

His ghazals and poems are included in the school syllabus from 1ˢᵗ to 12ᵗʰ and in graduate and post-graduate levels in various universities.

In the Urdu literary world, Bashar Nawaz, though known as a representative of classical heritage, does not hesitate to experiment with new poetic forms and styles of expression. He has immensely contributed to modern Urdu literature through his evocative poetry, ghazals, critical essays. Though a born poet, he has actively participated in local politics and was elected as a Municipal Councilor with a thumping majority in three consecutive municipal elections during the period from 1958 to 1972 when he had enjoyed unconditional political support of Leftist parties.

A CHRONOLOGY

1935   Born on 18ᵗʰ August at Aurangabad

1952   Completed S.S.C.

1954   First ghazal composed and recited the same in an All India Mushiara held at Aurangabad

1954   First ghazal published in 'Shahrah' a literary journal from Delhi and was selected in the anthology of best ghazals of the year.

1958   Married to Chand Sultana

1958-73   Elected Councilor of Aurangabad Municipal Council thrice (Three 5 year terms).

1972   First collection of poetry (ghazals and Nazms) *Raigan* published

1973   Published a collection of critical essays titled *Naya Adab Naye Masail*

1977   Received Shri Saraswati Shikshan Sanstha Hirak Mahotsav Award, Aurangabad

1982   Received Maharashtra State Urdu Academy Award

1998   Published collection of Urdu ghazals and Nazms entitled *Ajnabi Samandar*

With Zubair Rizwi, Gopi Chand Narang, Waris Alvi, Mohd. Alvi and others