

17 April 2002



Sahitya Akademi

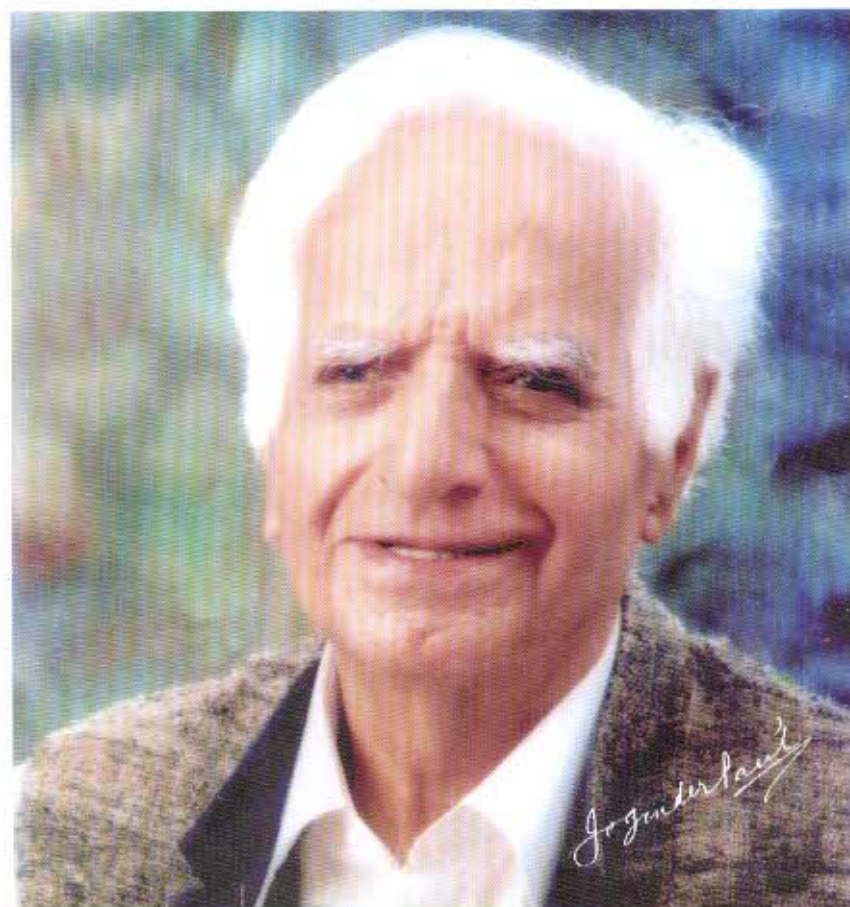


India International Centre

invite you to

**meet the author**

**Joginder Paul**



*Every time I turn to my past, I experience it anew. That's why, I trust, whatever happens — really happens — to you once, becomes part of you and continues to happen to you for good.*

Joginder Paul

A reputed fiction writer Joginder Paul was born in 1925 in Sialkot. Paul was born to poor and plain middle-aged parents 'suffering the pangs of poverty as divine will'. Unable to get regular employment after school, he had to join college. Even during summer vacations, Paul had to work to support his family. Much to the cheer of his parents, he completed his graduation. About this time, his first short story 'Tyag se Pehle', was published in *Saqi*, the magazine edited by the grand old Maulana, Shahid Ahmed Dehlvi.

The tumult of Freedom and Partition of the country resulted in his family's migration to Ambala. He undertook to be a milk boy to help his father at the shop and daily cycled scores of miles to fetch canfuls of milk from neighbouring villages. During

these days he acquired confidence to confront unpalatable realities and live the fiction which he later conceived as truer than reality.

He worked as a teacher of English in Kenya and soon settled in Kenya with all comforts. Yet he felt always an outsider. On every overseas leave to India, he wished that he would not go back to Kenya. But convenience brought him back each time.

Paul says, had he not lost his way to this part of the globe, he wouldn't have witnessed the massive human misery in the jungle darkness of the African face. "It was this awareness that provoked my enduring involvement in fiction. I wrote, during this early period, my short stories, which include 'Mojiza'(The Miracle) and 'Dharti ka Kaal'(Land Hunger). Both of



At Islamabad with his fellow-writers, 1986

them have remained my favourites in spite of my desire to quieten them a little," says Paul.

His first book of short stories, *Dharti ka Kaal*, introduced by Krishan Chander, carried stories of African environment. "It was my feeling of failure," he says, "in these stories which probably made me stray much later into my past African haunts and reassemble an innocent little folklore-like story 'Harambe'. His affair with fiction assumed wayward seriousness only after his creative involvement in African reality. The tragic spectacle of the gaping blind eyes in thickly black faces during his visit in a home for the blind at Machakos had dived profoundly into his consciousness and surfaced more than thirty years later, perfectly attuned to the contemporary Indian reality in his novel, *Nadeed*.

In 1964, he came back to India hoping he would settle down as a full-time writer, but he was led into joining as Principal of a college in Aurangabad. His intimate association with Yaqub Usmani Bhaiyya and Shroff Bhai in Aurangabad, with their preoccupation of serving others in the name of Allah in the case of Bhaiyya and as a rational enterprise in the case of Bhai, harnessed the question of conscience in art for Paul. Talking of these human monuments he thought of the monumental work in stone at Ellora caves which gave him the story, 'Peechhe'.



At Nairobi with his wife, 1954

In 1978, he migrated to start afresh in Delhi and he has since been living there engaged in his creative exercise in self-effacement. To Joginder Paul, "a living story never ends. As it ends in a book, it begins in the mind of the reader, with all the meanings attributable to his own perception". A creative short story belongs to everyone. The truth is that the reader's perception of the wherefores of human suffering may be much ampler than that of the writer. According to Paul, unless the words are imbued with their essence, they would serve to carry dead effigies rather than live characters in fiction.

Paul's uncertain residence in early life had rendered him, as he says guiltily, withdrawn. But his desperation for release was what perhaps led him to creative self-expression. A generous supply of misfortunes in a way amplified his capacity to suffer and identify with others. But for his authentic experience of *dukh*, he could not have created several such characters as Fajju of 'Back Lane', Bhabho of 'Jadoo', Dastango of 'Teesri Duniya', the young Bada of

'Chor Sipahi,' Moh Mai of 'Rone Dhone ka Sukh,' Mohan of 'Bashinde', and so many others. These characters have worked towards liberating him from his own narrow self.

Joginder Paul believes that the presence of the creative writer is more perceived when he is identifiable in his absence. "Although I have not been able to free myself totally from what I may call 'vanities of a writer', my absence does make me pregnantly humble and assured," says Paul.

Author of 2 novels, 3 novellas, 13 short story collections, 3 collection of mini short stories, and 2 works of literary criticism, Paul believes that creative expression is one and the same whether it is in English, Urdu or Swahili. Through his numerous articles in English, he has highlighted a new dimension to short story writing.

Recipient of several awards and honours, Paul's works have been widely translated into Indian and foreign languages.

### A Select Bibliography

#### Short Stories

*Dharti Ka Kaal.* Delhi : Hali Publishing House, 1961

*Mein Kiyun Sochun.* Amritsar: Adabistan Urdu, 1962

*Rasa'I.* Lucknow : Nusrat Publishers, 1968.

*Matti Ka Idraak.* Delhi : Lajpatrai & Sons, 1970

*Laikan.* Lucknow : Urdu Publishers, 1977

*Be Muhavara.* Aurangabad : Kailash Publication, 1978

*Be Irada.* Delhi : Zam Zam Book Trust, 1981

*Joginder Paul Ki Muntkhib Afsane.* Delhi : Seemant Prakashan, 1987 (Pakistan Edition) 1989



With his dear Baji and wife in London

*Khula.* Delhi : Modern Publishing House, 1989.

*Khodu Baba Ka Maqbara.* Delhi: Modern Publishing House, 1994.

*Joginder Paul Ke Afsanoñ Ka Intekhab.* Delhi : Taqhleeqkar Publishers, 1996.

*Joginder Paul Ke Shahkaar Afsane.* Lahore : Book Channel, 1996.

*Bastian.* Delhi : Urdu Academy, 2000.

### Mini Stories

*Silvaten.* Delhi : Lajpatrai & Sons, 1975.

*Katha Nagar.* Delhi : Rabta Group, 1986.

*Parinday.* Delhi : Taqhleeqkar Publishers, 2000.

### Novels and Novellas

*Aik Boond Lahoo Ki.* Karachi: Maktaba-e-Afkar (Indian Edition, 1964), 1963.

*Amado Raft.* Aurngabad : Indian Books Publications, 1975.

*Bayanat.* Aurangabad : Indian Books Publication, 1975.

*Nadeed.* Delhi : Rabta Group, 1983.

*Khwabrao.* Delhi : Educational Publishing House 1991 (Pakistani Edition, 1990).

### Criticism

*Rabta.* Delhi : Taqhleeqkar Publishers, 1997.

*Be Istelah.* Delhi : Taqhleeqkar Publishers, 1998.



With his mother, wife and children, 1954

## Chronology

- |      |  |      |  |
|------|--|------|--|
| 1925 | Birth  |      |  |
| 1947 | Migrated to India after Partition  |      | and Urdu Adab Award of Hindi-Urdu Adab Award, U.P.   |
| 1948 | Married and migrated to East Africa  |      |  |
| 1949 | Joined Ministry of Education in Kenya as a teacher   | 1987 | Published 'Yatra to Pakistan', a travelogue, in "Lotus India" after visit to Lahore and Karachi. |
| 1961 | Publication of the first collection of short stories, <i>Dharti ka Kaal</i>                      | 1988 | Visited Moscow & Tunisia to attend Afro-Asian writers Meet                                       |
| 1963 | Voluntary retirement from Education Department in Kenya. First visit to Pakistan since Partition | 1990 | Visit to England to be with Baji and then to the U.S. to be with his son                         |
| 1964 | Joined Saraswati Bhuvan College, Aurangabad (Maharashtra) as Professor in English                | 1991 | Shiromini Sahityakar Award, Punjab Govt.   |
| 1965 | Appointed Principal of S.B. College  | 1994 | Visit to Doha, Qatar, to deliver lecture on fiction  |
| 1983 | Ghalib Award of Ghalib Institute, Delhi  | 1996 | All India Bahadur Shah Zafar Award, Urdu Academy, Delhi  |
|      |  | 1999 | Iqbal Samman, Madhya Pradesh Govt.   |



Receiving Ghalib Award from Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, then Vice-President of India, 1983