

Classic Poetry Series

Iftikhar Arif
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Iftikhar Arif(21 March 1943)

Iftikhar Hussain Arif (Urdu: ?????? ????? ?????) commonly known as Iftikhar Arif (?????? ?????) is an Urdu poet, scholar and littérateur from Pakistan. His style is romantic Urdu poetry. He has headed Academy Adbiyat, the Pakistan Academy of Letters and currently, he is the Chairman of Muqtadra Quami Zaban, the National Language Authority. He has been decorated with Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Presidential Pride of Performance, highest literary awards by Government of Pakistan.

 Early Days and Education

Iftikhar Arif was born in Lucknow in 1943 and lived there till his migration to Pakistan in 1965. During this period he received his education at the Lucknow University where one of his teachers was Ehtisham Husain. He also studied at the Madressa-i-Nizamia, Farangi Mahal, and Government Jubilee College, Lucknow. He obtained a M.A. from the Lucknow university.

 Career

Iftikhar Arif came to Pakistan in 1965 and soon thereafter won fame not just on account of his poetry, but also for his performance in the programme Kasauti, along with Obaidullah Baig on Pakistan Television. Coming to Pakistan and settling in Karachi, Iftikhar Arif started his career as a Radio Pakistan newscaster. It was through Altaf Gauhar, then federal information secretary, that he was selected and appointed head of scripts in the Karachi television centre. He teamed up with Obaidullah Baig and won the Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) quiz show of the 1970s, Kasouti. Later, he spent 13 years in England working for the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) -sponsored Urdu Markaz. Coming back to Pakistan, he worked first as head of the National Language Authority (Muqtadara Qaumi Zaban), and then as chairman of the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL)and presently he is working again as a chairman of National Language Authority(Muqtadara Qaumi Zaban).

 Works and Achievements

Iftikhar Arif is a poet of Urdu. Three of his collections, Mehr-i-Noneem, Harf-i-Baryab and Jahan-e-Maloom have been published in many editions. In the introduction to the first book, Faiz Ahmed Faiz says that he has not only found traces of Meer and Ghalib in Iftikhar's poetry but also of Firaq Gorakhpuri and Noon Meem Rashid. Tributes have also been paid to him by such persons as

Annemarie Schimmel, Mumtaz Mufti, Meerza Adeeb, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Mushtaq Ahmad Yusufi, Anna Suvorova and Upinder Nath Ashk. Prof Mujtaba Husain feels that "Iftikhar Arif's poetry has the dash and pomp of Aatish and Yagana but he is without their aggression."

The Oxford University Press has selected a portion of Iftikhar Arif's poetry and had it translated into English. The collection has been published under the title, *Written in the Season of Fear*. The introduction to the book was written by Harris Khalique, a poet in English, Urdu and Punjabi.

Arif's poetry has been translated into a number of languages, including English, Russian, German, Persian, Hindi and Bhasha. A recording company has released a Pakistan Television Production of ghazals titled "Chup Durya" containing poems by Iftikhar Arif rendered by a number of prominent Pakistani singers, including Malka-i-Mooseeqi, the late Roshan Ara Begum, the late Madame Noor Jehan and Iqbal Bano etc.

** Awards**

Hilal-i-Imtiaz (2005), Sitara-e-Imtiaz(1999), Pride of Performance (literature 1990), Baba-e-Urdu Maulvi Abdul Haq Award, (poetry, 1995), Naqoosh Award (1994), Faiz International Award for Poetry by Aalami Urdu Conference and a number of other prestigious National and International literary awards.

Dayar-E-Nur Main Tera Shabon Ka Sathi Ho

Iftikhar Arif

Khwab Ki Tarah Bikhar Jane Ko Ji Chahta Hai

Iftikhar Arif

Mere Khuda Mujhe Itna To Motabar Kar De

Iftikhar Arif

Thakan To Agle Safar K Liye Bahana Tha

Iftikhar Arif

Written In The Season Of Fear

Those birds who want to try their wings against the odds of nature
who want to explore the working of the wind
Are now afraid to fly in open skies.

They know the one who'll hunt them down, and they
also know which net,

But who knows what scheme he's hatching and on which
branch he'll start.

Hunters...blind as their consciences...hunters that
seek to silence

The growing chorus of birds in the branches...
Set out to open every door of tyranny they can.

O Lord!

Even trees are now frozen with fear
As their branches wait for the fruit of voices
Who'll protect those birds who need to fly
In open skies with the shadow of your grace.
Grace them with the season of deliverance

[Translated from Uydu by Brenda Walker]

Iftikhar Arif

Ye Ab Khula Hai K Koi Bhi Manzar Mera Na Tha

Iftikhar Arif

Zara Si Der Ko Aye The Khwab Ankhon Main

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